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General Assembly

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14th plenary meeting
Friday, 24 September 2010, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Address by Mr. Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Hungary.

Mr. Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Schmitt: As an engaged member of the United Nations, Hungary wishes to play its part in international efforts aimed at building our common future. In this spirit, we do our utmost to contribute to the crisis-management and peacekeeping operations of the international community, and we seek to deliver special added value to international development and humanitarian activities. I can assure the Assembly that as a candidate country for Security Council membership for the period 2012-2013, Hungary stands ready to work vigorously to overcome divisions and to strengthen global partnerships in today's interdependent international environment.

The Preamble of the Charter states that we the peoples of the United Nations are determined, inter alia, "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" and, for this end, "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

In the year 2000, the United Nations exhibited leadership in the articulation and adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Contributions made at the MDG summit a few days ago reassured me that, although most of us are suffering from the fallout of the recent global crises, none of us would readily accept the vision of a bleak future that would result from slowing down the concrete actions we take. Hungary remains determined to take on its share of responsibility in realizing the MDGs on a global scale, and we will continue to implement donor programmes in various parts of the world.

The effects of the recent global financial and economic crisis have thrown millions of people into poverty, especially those who are most vulnerable in the developing world. The food, water and energy crises and humanitarian disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti and floods in Pakistan have also taken their toll on the lives of people. The growing number of disasters emphasizes the great need for prevention, preparedness and disaster risk reduction, as well as for development activities centred on the promotion of sustainable economic growth. Hungary believes that, in order to achieve success and effectively meet the needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in these turbulent times, a

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partnership-based approach needs to be adopted in this regard.

Similarly, climate change figures high among the pre-eminent challenges of the twenty-first century that threaten our well-being, security and economic development. The international community should pay particular attention to the well-founded and legitimate concerns of the small island States of the Caribbean and the Pacific in this regard. Our primary goal should now be the adoption of a series of ambitious, action-oriented decisions at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations to be held in Cancún, Mexico, later this year. Such decisions would prepare the ground for the adoption of a comprehensive and legally binding global framework next year in South Africa.

As a State member of the European Union, Hungary is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2020. Moreover, we are also ready to undertake further emissions reductions if our partners make similar commitments, taking into account their different capabilities.

The promotion and protection of human rights constitute the cornerstone of Hungary's foreign policy. Hungary acts at the forefront of international efforts to fight all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on national or ethnic origin. We are of the view that the rights of minorities, with special regard for the preservation of their cultural identities and linguistic heritage, should be high on the agenda of the international community. We believe that flourishing minority communities do not weaken a society but, on the contrary, contribute to the cultural enrichment of a country. Fruitful relationships between the majority and minorities can only be pursued if human rights are not being infringed and if tolerance prevails at all levels of society. This is one of the reasons that Hungary has decided to establish the Budapest-based Tom Lantos Institute, an international centre for promoting human rights and spreading the value of tolerance.

Hungary also feels compelled to raise the issue of women worldwide. The possible role played by women in accelerating the achievement of the MDGs and in reducing tensions and hostilities around the world should not be neglected. We are confident that the recent establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) marks significant progress in this regard and will make a great contribution to the elimination of the disadvantages facing women.

Let me express Hungary's sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for convening, on this very day, a High-level Meeting on the disarmament machinery. New dynamism in this area was also clearly demonstrated at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons earlier this year, and we are hopeful that the renewed international commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will lead to success.

We note with great concern, however, that the growing consensus around the ultimate goal of a so-called global zero of nuclear weapons is being offset by overt and covert attempts at the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles by certain countries. Hungary fully supports the statement made in New York on 22 September by the High Representative of the European Union, Catherine Ashton, on the negotiations conducted between the E3+3 Governments and Iran.

International terrorism is another of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Hungary strongly condemns this phenomenon in all its forms and manifestations and underscores the pivotal role of the United Nations in counter-terrorism. We welcome the fact that the recently concluded second review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy reinforced the consensus among Member States to foster a global counter-terrorism alliance. And, expressing our full solidarity with the victims of terrorism, we lend our unequivocal support to all United Nations efforts in this regard.

Almost a decade ago, this city of New York suffered one of the most horrendous terrorist attacks in human history. The appalling statement made by one of the speakers yesterday concerning this tragic event is unacceptable and is detrimental to the noble cause of promoting mutual understanding and dialogue among religions and civilizations.

The United Nations was created, and I shall again quote from the Preamble of the Charter, in order to "practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours". Coexistence and cooperation would serve regional stability in the Western Balkans, a region which, due to its proximity

to Hungary's borders, has great importance in our foreign policy.

In our view, progress towards the stabilization of the region and resolution of its persisting problems should be the result of an essentially internally driven process, with the unwavering support of the international community.

Hungary respects the recently issued advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo, and our country remains strongly committed to encouraging direct dialogue between the countries and communities of the region.

In Afghanistan, the international community in general, and the countries in the region in particular, should assist efforts towards reconciliation, good governance and sustainable development. Strengthening State institutions at all levels, improving the security situation and effectively implementing civilian development programmes are all essential for decreasing tensions and transferring responsibility and leadership to the Afghan Government. Hungary remains committed to supporting Afghanistan politically, and we will do our best to provide assistance to the country through both bilateral and multilateral channels.

We envisage the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. We also believe that the Middle East peace process should and can lead to overall Arab-Israeli reconciliation. We all know that it takes brave men to start a war, but it takes statesmen to finish it. In this spirit, Hungary welcomes and strongly supports the fact that the proximity talks have recently transformed into direct talks between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We commend the personal commitment of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the efforts made by the Quartet, including the European Union, as well as the valuable contributions made by a number of outstanding Arab statesmen in this regard.

Acting on its own, as well as within the United Nations framework, Hungary is a partner of African countries in enhancing development and establishing peace and security on the continent. We also encourage Africa's voice to be heard in relation to compelling global questions such as water management, poverty eradication and the empowerment of women. Still, we once again emphasize the significance of the role of African countries themselves and the importance of dialogue and negotiations in this process.

In conclusion, let me, on a personal note as the only Olympic champion in the Hall, emphasize my strong belief that multilateral partnerships can only be enhanced by respecting the jointly established rules, with special regard to the rules of fair play with other teams and players on the field. I am confident that, during the coming session of work, the noble principles of the United Nations will continue to guide all delegations in strengthening the kind of global cooperation within the United Nations machinery that is so strongly needed to tackle the challenges facing us today. I wish to assure the Assembly that Hungary stands ready to do its utmost to contribute to those noble goals.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Hungary for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Argentine Republic.

Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Fernández (*spoke in Spanish*): Most of the speeches we have heard so far today and yesterday have had three main focuses. One of them, without a doubt, is the global economic crisis, its impact and evolution and how to overcome it. Climate change has been another focus. And, finally, the third fundamental and very important topic has been the maintenance of international peace and security.

I believe that emerging countries, and Argentina in particular, have a wealth of experience to share in connection with these three topics, and that we need to take a position. With respect to the global crisis, whose impact has been felt in emerging countries despite the fact that it actually originated in developed countries, it must be pointed out that it was precisely the developing countries that supported the economic growth of the past decade and that will again reignite and sustain economic growth and activity and thus provide the means to overcome what is perhaps the most significant economic crisis since 1930. And Argentina, in this sense, was somewhat of a guinea pig for the policies of the 1990s, when it was held up as a model pupil while it was in reality ratcheting up unsustainable levels of debt, producing neither goods nor services, and actually experiencing a fall in job-creation, finally collapsing in 2001 in a financial crisis very similar to that which shook the world in the third quarter of 2008.

The ground fell out from beneath Argentina in 2001. However, through the policies we pursued from 2003 onwards, we have been able to overcome that crisis, which so closely resembled that which hit the world in 2008. And we did so through our own efforts and, crucially, with an economic and political strategy that was not dictated by demands from the multilateral credit institutions but was in line with our own convictions and, crucially, our own interests.

In the eight years leading up to this bicentennial year — this year, my country marks 200 years of freedom — we have achieved the most significant economic growth ever seen in our 200 years of history. We managed to emerge from debt in a way never before seen in our history. Since that sovereign default of 2001, which was the greatest such default in history, today Argentina has renegotiated 93 per cent of its total debt with Argentine debt title-holders. And, moreover, Argentina has achieved heretofore unknown inclusive growth in the past year, following our application of counter-cyclical measures throughout all of 2009 and in late 2008. We have experienced growth in economic activity of 9 per cent over the past 12 months. We brought the unemployment rate back down to 7.9 per cent. And we managed to continue reducing the rates of poverty and extreme poverty, which are now at levels never before seen in our country.

This is due essentially to counter-cyclical economic management and to an understanding that instruments such as the central bank, reserves, foreign trade, production, employment generation and better living standards, with a robust expansion in fiscal spending, are exactly what has meant that the crisis overwhelming developing countries has not had the same impact it would have had at other times.

In this context, I wish to point out that we have also promoted the intelligent use of our reserves, which is something currently under discussion in all multilateral bodies, in the world of economics and in the context of the Group of 20. We have used our reserves rationally because we believe that, in our case, they are the result of a trade surplus — that is to say, hard currency dollars — and should be applied to paying down the debt rather than putting them into capital markets, thereby resulting in double-digit debt while we would be paid only 0.5 per cent interest for our reserves. It would really have been senseless and irrational for our country to go into double-digit debt when in reality we had more than enough reserves, for which we would be paid barely 0.5 per cent.

What I am trying to say is that our experience in Argentina, as well as that of other emerging countries — which, I wish to reiterate once again, are shoring up economic growth — makes it incumbent upon the Group of 20, as well as the Group of 77, where we will also push for this, to carry out a rigorous reform of international credit agencies, which have failed in their fundamental purpose: to ensure a stable global economy that produces jobs and well-being for the inhabitants of the planet.

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In that regard, we believe that it is truly urgent for there to be global legislation in the area of vulture funds, which basically move from one area of the country to another in genuinely speculative ways and have a pitiless impact on economies. We also believe that there is a need to evaluate and legislate on risk-rating agencies, which for instance rated Argentina's debt as highly risky when it reality the Argentine Republic had been scrupulously paying its debt since the first renegotiation, in 2005, without turning to capital markets. Nevertheless, they have given much higher rankings to countries that subsequently demonstrated that they did not have the capacity to address their debt because they had structural problems in their economies, such as fiscal deficits, commercial

deficits and reserve outflows — precisely the opposite of what took place in Argentina.

We therefore believe in the need for global re-engineering of multilateral funds — essentially in a theoretical framework different from the one that the world has experienced, namely, the Washington Consensus. That Consensus has been exhausted by failure, but has not been replaced by a new theoretical framework that gives different roles to central banks, as well as to States as instruments to promote counter-cyclical fiscal measures that ensure something which, in our opinion, is a central concern: employment stability, rather than just currency stability.

We also sincerely believe that currencies should not be protected solely from a monetary perspective; on the contrary, we believe that the value of each country's currency is directly linked to the potential for growth and wealth-generation capacity of each country's economy. It is also linked to the equitable distribution of wealth, which should make societies sustainable through a model that is not just economic but also essentially political.

Climate change, which is very important and will soon be addressed at the Cancun meeting, has also been a central theme in all the interventions that have been made from this rostrum. While it is well and good to speak of that, we have not been able to reach an agreement because, in fact, we are not being offered a solution in this area that is just and equitable in terms of who, and to what degree, should bear primary responsibility for damage due to environmental pollution. It is not fair that developing countries — which, by paying a high price, have been able to overcome high levels of poverty and social inequality through economic growth — should be the ones that have to assume responsibility for the environmental legacy of developed countries, which for decades contaminated the world and which should therefore be the ones to shoulder this responsibility. Establishing viable targets and goals that are in line with the need to continue to grow the economy also require that we seriously realign our goals in the area of global warming.

With regard to the final focus, namely, building international peace and security, we sincerely believe that the resumption of dialogue between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority is very good news indeed when it comes to finally achieving what I believe all of us have looked forward to for quite a long time: that the State of Palestine will be seated as a full member during the next session of the General Assembly. We believe that will make an enormous contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. I say this by virtue of our experience as a country that has been a target and victim of international terrorist groups. As the Assembly is aware, in 1992 and 1994 my country was the victim of two terrible terrorist attacks. The first was the blowing up of the Israeli Embassy, and the second tragedy was the bombing of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA).

In that regard, in 2007, my country's then President, Néstor Kirchner, requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to agree to the extradition of Iranian citizens whom the Argentine justice system had accused of participation in carrying out that heinous crime. I did the same as President in 2008 and 2009 — to little effect, I must confess. I did so while emphasizing that mine is a leading country in respecting human rights and bringing to justice those who commit crimes against humanity. I have also underscored that we have a system that ensures due process and the right to counsel and that does not permit anyone to be tried or convicted in absentia. It is for those reasons that we continue to make this request for extradition. We have also emphasized that for any Argentine citizens who believe that our country's justice system is not fair enough or does not enforce the law, we are party to international conventions to which they can turn, including such international tribunals as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Despite the fact that we have guaranteed that all these principles will continue to be respected in the Argentine Republic, we have not yet achieved results.

I shall not on this occasion call for the fourth time for something that will clearly not achieve results. But I will propose to the Islamic Republic of Iran — even if it has no faith in Argentine justice, as it has said, because of prejudgement and insufficient neutrality to carry out a trial — that a third country be selected, through mutual agreement between our countries, in which there are guarantees of due process and where international observers and United Nations representatives may participate to bring to trial the terrible attack on AMIA in our country. I should also like to say that we do not consider that attack as an

attack on one community or one religion. For us, it was an attack on all Argentines.

I am President of a country where we can celebrate the Jewish New Year with the Jewish community, as I did this year in my capacity as leader of the country. We also celebrated the end of Ramadan at an Islamic centre. We are a country of open-mindedness because of our immigrant heritage, which guarantees plurality and diversity for all.

There is a precedent for what we are proposing. This precedent is not a capricious or fantastical legal construction; it is the Lockerbie case. That is an international precedent of a trial held in a third neutral country that could provide guarantees for those who fear they might not be judged impartially. In this connection, I would like to clarify that the Argentine Republic is not seeking guilty parties. All the Argentine Government seeks is justice. Ultimately, anyone who has committed a crime of such magnitude should be punished.

Thus, we hope that the offer I make to the Islamic Republic of Iran today before the General Assembly will put an end to the pretext of non-neutrality and to accusations of our complicity in withholding impartial justice. I address this in particular to those who insist that there can be no impartial justice. I believe that this eloquent gesture has international precedents and will allow us to resolve this situation and to channel this dispute institutionally. We must do this if we wish to feel truly part of the international community. We must resolve this dispute in a framework of justice and legality.

Finally, again in connection with security concerns, we must once again, here in this Assembly, demand respect for our sovereign rights over the Malvinas Islands. We do not do so solely for historical reasons. Our claim is absolutely up to date. The United Kingdom has systematically refused to implement universally binding General Assembly resolutions calling for negotiations with the Argentine Republic on the question of sovereignty.

But that is not all. Unilateral decisions have been taken to exploit hydrocarbon resources on the islands. There are two aspects to this exploitation. The first is that it constitutes depredation of natural resources that belong to us. It is unthinkable that territorial, historical or legal sovereignty can be maintained over islands that are 14,000 kilometres from the United Kingdom and whose transplanted population sits on a continental shelf that unquestionably belongs to the Argentine Republic geographically, geologically and historically.

The second aspect is the risk of ecological catastrophe. British Petroleum, operating off the coast of the United States in the Gulf of Mexico, set off an unprecedented ecological catastrophe. The lack of oversight by our country or any other over what the United Kingdom is doing in the Malvinas Islands has mobilized us not only to defend the natural resources of my country, but to seek to avert an ecological catastrophe that could occur due to this total lack of oversight.

Some may say that this has nothing to with security. It has a great deal to do with security, because one of the central problems of our globalized world is the need to adapt the Security Council to our times. We need a Security Council worthy of its name. England, like other countries that have a permanent seat on the Council, has used and misused its position. Resolutions of the Council are applicable only to those countries that do not have sufficient power or the right to a permanent seat on the Council. The Council should be reformed because it has never been able to maintain international peace and security.

That is not simply because some seats are permanent or because the world context has changed since the San Francisco Charter created the Security Council. The Security Council, with its permanent members, was a Security Council where those who were seated could, by pressing a red button, cause a nuclear holocaust. That was the true reason for creating a Council that could strike a balance between the interests of a bipolar world and prevent a nuclear holocaust.

That world no longer exists. Those who were once irreconcilable enemies and rivals are now associates, allies, friends or whatever anyone might care to call them. What is certain is that those who can unleash terrible conflict situations, tragedies and international terrorism are not and never will be seated there. Thus, the Security Council has lost its effectiveness because it is not in line with today's world or the dangers besetting it. Quite the contrary, the use and misuse of their dominant position by members of the Council in certain countries have provoked conflicts that cannot then be stifled by the Council, much less by the Organization.

We believe that the case of the Malvinas Islands is very enlightening. The United Kingdom can do as it likes because no one is compelling it to implement the decisions of the Security Council, because it is a permanent member and an important member of NATO. In a world of double standards — where only the developing and extremely weak countries are compelled to abide by the international legal order while those who can systematically violate it do so — it is not possible to build peace, let alone maintain international security, because such situations end up creating the kind of insurmountable disputes and differences we see every day.

I believe it important to note that the concepts of security and peace can never be associated with military matters alone. They must be essentially associated with political values, equity, freedom and a cause for which humankind has fought from the beginning: equality.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Argentine Republic for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Gabonese Republic.

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bongo Ondimba (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to convey to Mr. Joseph Deiss, on behalf of my country, our heartfelt congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. His proven experience and skill will ensure that our deliberations are successful. I thank his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for the excellent manner in which he discharged his mandate. To the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, I reiterate the support of Gabon for his tireless involvement in building a world that is more free, just and united.

I take this opportunity to express from this rostrum my gratitude to all here and the entire international community for the solidarity they extended to the people of Gabon when my predecessor, the late President Omar Bongo Ondimba, passed away. I am also grateful for the many forms of support extended to us throughout Gabon's process of democratic transition, which has highlighted the credibility and reliability of our institutions and our people's sense of responsibility.

For almost a year now, I have engaged Gabon in broad-ranging economic, social and political reforms centred on promoting our environmental heritage and industrial sector and on making the service sector more dynamic. When I took office, I presented the three strategic pillars of an emergent Gabon: Green Gabon, Industrial Gabon and Services Gabon.

By putting Green Gabon at the head of that list, I wanted to underscore the central role that this sector will play in Gabon's economy. I see Green Gabon as a cross-cutting approach that underlies our overall development strategy. Industrial Gabon draws upon efforts to promote our natural resources, while respecting the basic principles of environmental preservation. Services Gabon highlights the country's ownership of new information and communications technology, the promotion of tourism, transportation improvements and the development of human resources.

In the light of this vision, we have established a climate council to mainstream the issues of climate change into our national development policies. In the same vein, we have just entered into a partnership with Brazil and with France to establish a satellite imaging facility to monitor the forest cover of the Congo basin, which comprises more than 2 million square kilometres of equatorial rainforest.

The many initiatives in which I have engaged my country are aimed in particular at improving governance, fighting corruption, reducing State expenses and preserving the environment, all of which requires international support. We bear in mind, of course, that our future depends above all upon our own

efforts to manage our resources, achieve good governance and serve the greater good.

Beyond our desire to mobilize further national and international resources, we continue to be firmly committed to the quest for peace and security, both regionally and globally. Through our membership in the Security Council, we are fully shouldering our responsibilities and making our contribution to the quest for a world that can look to the future with confidence.

The theme of our debate gives us yet another opportunity to assess the role of the United Nations in global governance. Our world still bears the scars of the terrible financial and economic crisis of 2008, which spared no country. The rapid and robust mobilization of the international community, and the United Nations in particular, in the face of this crisis demonstrated its ability to respond when it is motivated and supported by genuine political will. Such international solidarity should be made systematic, and we hope it will be renewed in efforts to deal with the emerging challenges that we face today.

Given the complexity of the new crises we face today, we need to design a new approach to conflict management. Peacekeeping has not had just successes; quite the contrary, there are many cases in which, for lack of resources and ambition, the United Nations has been unable to intervene and thus abandoned defenceless populations to rebels and other armed groups.

It is time for us to move beyond peacekeeping so that we can adopt, when circumstances require, a philosophy of imposing peace. We need to give ourselves the capacity to deploy robust peace missions commensurate with the nature of the conflicts that continue to destabilize certain States. Peacekeeping in and of itself will not be able to meet the challenges of security. I reiterate my call for a culture of conflict prevention, which has the advantage of both averting many casualties and saving the modest resources that are so necessary to our countries' development.

The quest for peace and security remains a constant concern in Africa and elsewhere. The imminent referendum on Southern Sudan appears to be clouded with uncertainties. Indeed, the hope of a political settlement to that thorny regional issue is paralleled by the fear of the balkanization of a continent that has already suffered too many divisions. The stakes in the Sudan today perhaps foreshadow a cycle that will mark Africa's future. I appeal to the parties and the international community, in the interests of the populations involved, to take full stock of their responsibility to ensure the success of a process leading up to the referendum.

Here, I commend the commitment of the United Nations and the African Union to supporting the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to which my country remains committed. Specifically with respect to Darfur, I call on all parties to be further involved in the Doha political process. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the State of Qatar for its efforts to that end.

In Somalia, I commend the support of the United Nations for the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia to put an end to instability in that country. Yesterday's mini-summit on the situation in that country attested to the United Nations ongoing interest in reaching a settlement on the question of Somalia.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the reconfiguration of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo — now the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — essentially aimed at enhancing protection for civilian populations, should be highlighted. It demonstrates the willingness of the United Nations to adapt to changing situations on the ground. I call on the countries of the region and the international community to support the efforts of the Congolese Government in its determination to ensure security and stability throughout its territory.

With respect to the situation in Western Sahara, I encourage the parties to restart the Manhasset talks, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, in order to end the current stalemate and move towards a political solution acceptable to all.

Finally, with respect to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Madagascar, I urge the international community to support them in holding free, democratic elections in accordance with the various arrangements reached to that end.

The search for peace in the Middle East is another area of concern to the international community. I commend the diplomatic efforts undertaken by the United States, which have brought about the resumption of direct talks between Israelis and

Palestinians. I also thank the other Quartet members and Egypt for their involvement in that process. It is my hope that these consultations will continue and lead to the establishment of a Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders.

The terrorist threat, unfortunately, continues to weigh heavily on international peace and security. No nation large or small is spared. Defeating this scourge will require effective cooperation among all Member States, with the assistance of the United Nations and its specialized institutions. We will also need to give ongoing attention to other cross-cutting threats to international peace and security, such as piracy, the proliferation of weapons, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. We commend the efforts already undertaken by the United Nations in this area, particularly the strengthening of the legal regime and mechanisms to counter those threats.

With respect to the issue of climate change, together with other heads of State and Government in Copenhagen, I undertook the quest for a consensus on the idea of a legally binding instrument. We support the negotiations undertaken in Copenhagen and continued in Bonn and hope that they will lead, in Cancún, to the reaffirmation of the commitments taken, particularly in terms of financing for the fight against climate change in developing countries and the 20 per cent reduction of greenhouse gasses in the industrialized countries by 2020.

The advancement of women is undeniably one of the areas in which the United Nations has made genuine progress. The recent establishment of a new institution called UN Women, the primary mission of which is to better coordinate all the activities related to gender issues, clearly illustrates the fact that our Organization is addressing this concern. I take this opportunity to convey my sincere congratulations to an extraordinary woman, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, for her appointment as head of this new entity.

Given the many challenges facing humanity, we owe it to ourselves to work together in a coordinated manner to provide a global response that matches the aspirations of our peoples. The universality of the United Nations symbolizes the shared destiny of the world's people, and the Organization thus has a central role to play, both in global governance and in the emergence of a more just economic and social order. From that standpoint, I reaffirm the need to adapt our Organization to the changing international context. Revitalizing the work of the General Assembly, reforming the Security Council and ensuring the coherence of the United Nations system are areas that have to be dealt with to strengthen the central role of our Organization.

At a time when we are realigning our common efforts with the current international environment and when democratizing global governance is emerging as a necessity, I would like to reaffirm, from this rostrum, Africa's aspiration to fully take its place among the family of nations. We fervently call for the democratization of the United Nations system in order to adapt it to today's realities.

Indeed, we believe that it is an anachronism that Africa is under international pressure to reaffirm democratic values while those same laudable values cannot be applied within our own Organization. I believe the time has come for Africa to shoulder all its responsibilities, stop its continual reliance on assistance from its partners and take its own destiny in hand. This affirmation of Africa's place on the international scene leads me to call for its permanent presence in the Security Council. We are prepared to meet that challenge in order to treat the wounds of a history replete with injustices done to the continent.

Beyond the democratization of the United Nations system, which we wholeheartedly call for, the credibility of our efforts also requires that we meet the development promises made to humankind.

Africa's destiny assuredly hangs on compliance with the commitments undertaken in Monterrey, Gleneagles, Doha, Paris and, more recently, in Muskoka and Toronto. Those commitments should not be postponed indefinitely.

As humanity is one in its essence and varied in its forms, it is important that the management of the world's affairs be done with the collaboration of all, in order to ensure that the generations to come can look to the future with confidence.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Gabonese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by General Michel Sleiman, President of the Lebanese Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Lebanese Republic.

General Michel Sleiman, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency General Michel Sleiman, President of the Lebanese Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sleiman (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to thank his predecessor for his able management of the Assembly's work at its previous session. I also wish to express my appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his valuable report on the various aspects of the work of our international Organization (A/65/1).

This is the first time I have addressed this Assembly since Lebanon was elected a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2010-2011 term. That status confers on us responsibilities that Lebanon is proud to assume in service of its causes and the just causes of the Arab world, and in the service of justice and peace around the world. In that context, I would like to commend the efforts and commitments undertaken as a result of the high-level meeting of the Security Council (6389th meeting) aimed at increasing the effectiveness of its role and enabling it to implement its resolutions without resorting to double standards.

Moreover, we welcome the statement issued after the Assembly's High-level Plenary Meeting on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, which contribute to alleviating poverty, promoting education and improving health services. We also commend the progress achieved by the United Nations in strengthening the role of women, an issue to which Lebanon attaches special importance, in line with its enlightened role in that regard. Indeed, Lebanon was among the first countries in our region to grant women the right to vote in legislative elections, in 1953.

Despite the growing and important role the United Nations plays in the field of socio-economic development, our Organization remains, in essence, a political organization, one that was created primarily to maintain international peace and security and to protect humanity from the scourge of the wars and conflicts that had befallen it and that had blocked progress and development over successive periods of history.

In that context, since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict the United Nations has not hesitated to address that issue and has adopted a series of resolutions aimed at reinstating peoples' rights and consolidating the pillars of peace and development. However, those efforts abated and faded in the face of Israel's intransigence and its obvious inclination to expand and to implement a settlement policy. Indeed, to this day Israel refuses to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place all of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We welcome the current growing international awareness of the urgent need to find a settlement, within set time frames, to the Middle East problem, with the Palestinian issue at its heart, and to revive efforts to reach such a settlement. However, decades of experience show that a genuine, permanent solution for the Middle East problem is impossible unless it is a just and comprehensive solution, one that addresses all aspects of the conflict on all tracks.

Also, such a solution is impossible unless the international community musters the necessary determination to move from making declarations on guiding principles towards working to ensure the appropriate means for implementation, while promoting the elements that would lead to a solution based on internationally legitimate resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and all the provisions of the Arab Peace Initiative. We highlight in particular those provisions that ensure a rejection of any settlement by Palestinian refugees in Arab host countries, since the circumstances of those countries do not allow for such settlement.

In fact, Lebanon has frequently declared that it will not accept any form of settlement of Palestinian refugees on its territories. That is due to the reasons

and considerations I emphasized in the Security Council yesterday (see S/PV.6389), and is especially true because such settlement would entail dangerous repercussions and would threaten security and the pillars of stability. It is important to note that the issue of Palestinian refugees cannot be solved through isolated Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in a way that disregards Lebanon and other concerned host countries.

At this point, we must reiterate that the primary responsibility for guaranteeing decent living conditions for and the well-being of the Palestinian refugees falls on the shoulders of the international community. We also reiterate that increasing the contributions to the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East — which was created specifically for that purpose in 1949 — would guarantee a life of dignity for Palestinian refugees, under the sovereignty of the host countries and with their assistance, without extremism or violence.

On the other hand, Lebanon once again condemns international terrorism, from which it has suffered in different ways. Lebanon cooperates with the international community in combating terrorism and supports the calls to explore measures to clearly define terrorism and address its root causes in order to clearly distinguish it from legitimate resistance to foreign occupation, which is recognized by the United Nations Charter and relevant resolutions.

While Lebanon is committed to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and seeks to compel Israel to implement all its provisions, Israel continues its daily violations of Lebanese airspace, territory and waters, violations that the Secretary-General has described as provocative in many of his reports. Moreover, the Israeli spy networks and recruitment of agents aimed at sowing strife and destabilizing our country have reached a point where the international community must take a firm position and thwart those acts of Israeli aggression and persistent threats against Lebanon, its people and its infrastructure.

The international community must also compel Israel to withdraw from the Lebanese territories that it still occupies in the Sheba'a farms area, the hills of Kfar Shuba, and the northern part of Al-Ghajar village, without delay or preconditions. In that regard, it is important to note that we retain our right to retrieve or liberate our remaining occupied territories by all legitimate and available means.

Furthermore, Lebanon looks forward to receiving more financial and technical support to pursue the removal of mines and cluster bombs that were randomly planted by Israel in residential areas during the aggression of July 2006 and the periods of its occupation of Lebanese territories. Within the appropriate framework, Lebanon will spare no efforts to seek to compel Israel to compensate for all the losses and damage it caused Lebanon throughout its successive aggressions.

In the face of Israel's designs and in keeping with international law, Lebanon also wishes to assert its right to use its waters, oil and natural gas wealth, especially as it plans to exploit those resources within the limits of its exclusive economic zone. Parts of the southern border of that zone were delineated as shown on the map that the Lebanese Government submitted to the Secretariat on 9 July 2010.

While we commend the efforts and sacrifices made by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which operates in south Lebanon, and while we are keen to continue that arrangement, we re-emphasize the importance of continued coordination and cooperation between the Lebanese army and the international forces, in accordance with the agreed rules of engagement, in order to ensure the proper implementation of the mission entrusted to those forces. That cooperation is matched only by arrogant and provocative Israeli positions that are the root causes of the incidents that occur every once in a while along the Blue Line and that, with some work, could be prevented.

During the past few years, Lebanon has strived to maintain its internal stability through dialogue, by completing its implementation of the Taif Accords, by resorting to legal institutions to resolve any disputes, and through its commitment to the resolutions of the Security Council and other internationally legitimate resolutions. Lebanon was keen to meet all constitutional deadlines without any delays, whether for municipal or parliamentary elections. Those elections took place in a free, transparent and calm atmosphere, in accordance with the requirements of democracy and the principle of the peaceful devolution of power.

In addition, Lebanon undertook efforts to prevent any external aggression by seeking to compel Israel to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and by mobilizing all its national deterrence capabilities within the framework of its national defence strategy.

As we vow to persevere with that solid approach, no matter the dangers, with the support of the free and conscious will of the Lebanese people and the support of friendly and sisterly States, we are confident that Lebanon will always be open to dialogue and to civilized, rich and innovative interaction. We remain loyal to our mission and committed to strengthening the state of justice and law, despite all challenges, and to upholding the values of freedom, democracy and concord — values our country has based itself on since its inception.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Lebanese Republic for the statement he has just made.

General Michel Sleiman, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Wade (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal welcomes the election of Mr. Joseph Deiss to lead the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We are aware of his personal qualities and are confident that his presidency will bear the hallmark of his country's traditional neutrality. I warmly congratulate him and wish him every success.

I would also like to pay homage to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his outstanding work in guiding the work of the Assembly's sixty-fourth session. I also express our great gratitude to our Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless devotion to his delicate task in the service of our common ideals.

The state of the world has improved little since the Assembly's last session. We continue to face the same urgent issues: the ongoing economic crisis and continued environmental degradation. Unfortunately, with regard to the latter, the Copenhagen Conference was unable to provide a satisfactory response — not because of a lack of will, but rather because the question has been inappropriately framed, as I said at that meeting. To that list we must add persistent issues such as transnational organized crime, international terrorism and illicit drug trafficking.

As we meet here to consider and act together on those major challenges, we are giving hope to our people with regard to finding concerted answers to those many and complex problems, which no country can face alone. It is therefore altogether fitting that we turn to the world Organization to find a collective response, or at least to exchange experiences.

The theme of the Assembly's sixty-fifth session — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — is therefore quite timely. Perhaps we ourselves have been tardy in launching this debate. In my view, it is not a matter of determining whether the Organization has contributed to improving global governance, but rather a question of how to make its efforts more useful and effective in the face of the unprecedented upheavals that the world has experienced in recent years.

International relations have accelerated considerably in a very short time. Much of what was taken as certain is no longer true and accepted notions have been shaken. What we call the established order has been turned on its head by the emergence of new forces arising from globalization and economic competition.

The changes that have taken place call for a new state of mind and another way of perceiving and managing world affairs by adapting the system to the new realities of the twenty-first century. Are we prepared to define a new world order in which Africa and emerging Powers fully play the role that the ongoing changes are conferring upon them? The answers we provide on those issues will depend, at least in part, on the role of the Organization in global governance.

After 65 years of existence, the United Nations system continues to bear the legacy of a bygone historical era, with the Charter of the United Nations itself bearing post-war stigmas and colonial prejudices. For instance, the Charter still refers to the idea of an enemy State, in the sense of a Power defeated in war. Also, Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice refers to general principles of law recognized by civilized nations — as if uncivilized nations still existed. In themselves, such anachronisms from another time demonstrate the need to reform the system.

Moreover, the nature of the issues now addressed by the Organization has become quite diverse, just as its composition and the volume of is work have increased considerably, while some of its mechanisms, including that for collective security, have remained nearly unchanged.

In 1945 the Organization had 51 Members; today it has 192. The composition of the Security Council, a body which is supposed to reflect the will of Member States, has been altered only once, in 1965, when the number of seats increased from 11 to 15 with the inclusion of additional non-permanent seats. And 17 years since we began negotiations on the Council's reform, there are still no prospects for consensus.

Maintaining the status quo at all costs means ignoring the radical changes that have taken place in the world, thereby making the Council susceptible to greater mistrust, defiance and criticism. That inertia may prove to be dangerous owing to the lack of representation, legitimacy and credibility that could result. If today many of the Council's decisions are being called into question and not properly implemented, it is because they are perceived by the great majority of Member States as being more expressions of national interest than the carrying out of a mandate on behalf of the community of nations.

I am not personally in agreement with the eminent observer of the United Nations who has written that "the organization of the Security Council belongs to the nineteenth century". I believe that it bears the hallmark of our times, but it needs to be improved and delivered of its shortcomings.

How can we preserve a credible role in global governance for the Organization if Africa — which makes up more than a fourth of its Members and accounts for more than 70 per cent of the issues on the agenda — does not have a permanent seat on the Security Council? Several years ago in this Hall, in order to put an end to that anomaly and to right an historic injustice, Senegal proposed that — independent of the ongoing reform, which will take time, given that it began 17 years ago — Africa be given a permanent seat with veto power.

Meanwhile, the same grievances that have been levelled against the Security Council have also been raised with regard to international criminal justice. Twelve years ago, the common need for international criminal justice that was universal, permanent and neutral led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to complement national jurisdictions in punishing and preventing the most serious crimes.

Because Senegal has faith in the ideals of peace and justice for all, it reiterates its commitment to the Court. It was the first country to ratify its Statute, on 2 February 1999. Nevertheless, the Court will never be credible if the President of the Sudan is the only one to be pursued, with suspect eagerness.

While the setting up of the ICC represents a significant advance in the fight against impunity, it is in its practice that the Court itself will be judged. And for that practice to be free of suspicion and questioning, we must ensure that it reflects the principles agreed by the United Nations with regard to human rights: universality, objectivity, non-selectivity and impartiality. On the basis of those principles, the Court should deal with all situations within its jurisdiction in the same way, whoever the perpetrators and whatever their nationality.

Given the deep and multifaceted crisis, global economic governance remains a pertinent issue. Consultative frameworks such as the Group of Eight (G-8) and the Group of Twenty (G-20) are trying to address it in order to lay the foundations for a new world order. Those efforts are praiseworthy.

Today, there are a number of us who would like to establish an independent circle of very high-level specialists so as to put ourselves upstream of the G-8 and the G-20 and to provide heads of State and Government with our thinking on the topics that they are considering. We would even like to go beyond the technical nature and address more fundamental issues. The job of setting all that up has been entrusted to me, and I am dedicating myself to the task.

With regard to the unchecked increase in the price of oil, which penalizes non-producing countries, I have already proposed a mechanism that would make it possible to bring together the corporate superprofits, the income of producing countries and the surcharges on non-producing countries, to serve as the basis for a policy which I call "oil against poverty", using a fund financed by the contributions of the first two categories, which share the oil revenues.

In order to parry the fierce rise in agricultural prices, I suggest that we consider that issue again at a conference in Dakar — the second Dakar Agricultural Fair. We propose a mechanism that fully integrates producers in order to establish world governance of agricultural prices, taking into account the interests of producers and consumers. That will be the aim of the conference, which will be held in our capital in January and February 2011.

In the same spirit, we continue to contribute to efforts to protect the environment, in particular in the context of the project to build the Great Green Wall. It is a barrier of trees the length of the Sahel-Saharan region, from Dakar to Djibouti, 7,000 kilometres long by 15 kilometres wide, and that project is already being implemented. It has earned us the support of the Global Environment Facility, which has granted the countries involved the sum of $119 million.

With regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the assessment that the Assembly's High-level Plenary Meeting has just made clearly shows that, despite our progress, we must remain mobilized in order to meet the agreed commitments by the 2015 deadline.

In Senegal, thanks to the national assessment that we carried out last May, we have gauged the work to be done by 2015. Our main conclusion is that a quantitative approach that sees development only in terms of money is insufficient. We must show more creativity and more imagination in our own country. For its part, Senegal has implemented the following innovations.

First is the GOANA Strategy — the Great Agricultural Offensive for Food and Abundance, which enabled us to go from an importer of food products in 2008 to self-sufficiency and even net exporter in 2010.

We have introduced the Neighbourhood Godmother initiative, which empowers women in the fight against maternal and child mortality so as to speed up implementation of the MDGs related to health. It is based on the sociology of our African societies. In every neighbourhood or village, there is always a woman who is the focus of all the others, and, by giving her a role, we empower her to watch over the pregnant women and attend to them, even at the child's birth. That requires only very little equipment, such as a mobile phone. That supervision, we believe, will make it possible to reduce maternal and child mortality.

Next is the Modern Daras initiative — daras means studying in Arabic — which introduces the teaching of Arabic, French and English and vocational training in madrasas in order to progress towards the complete disappearance of those students who graduate from madrasas very learned and able to recite the Koran, but who are jobless. That initiative is supported by Senegal's religious leaders. And we simply think that it is possible to provide children with spiritual training and further education at the same time. We have introduced Christian and Muslim religious education into schools.

Another initiative is the scheme to allocate 40 per cent of the national budget to education and training in order to ensure sufficient quality human resources, able to take up the challenge of development. If I am not mistaken, Senegal is the only country to have agreed to that sacrifice — to put 40 per cent of the budget into education.

The Bac Minus One initiative means that we take the young people who have failed the baccalaureate examination and have them help school teachers promote primary education, in order to address the criterion of universal primary education.

Naturally, we have launched a policy to promote rural women. Today there are facilities that enable them to retain the added value that was previously in the hands of factories and producers, that is to say, those who control the money.

We have also proposed a new definition of poverty, which is not the fact of having less than $1 a day. Poverty is a combination of deficiencies, such as in housing, decent food, access to school and health care. We are dealing with that by creating villages in which all those fundamental needs can be met.

The Assembly knows about the Digital Solidarity Fund initiative, which we launched a few years ago to

help bridge the digital divide between developed countries and underdeveloped countries.

I would also like to report that we have launched the Eco-villages Strategy, which involves converting traditional villages to energy self-sufficiency by using clean energy such as solar or wind in order to lessen the degradation of our environment.

Lastly, the initiative for complete equality between men and women in Senegal in all fully or partially elected bodies is a way for us to marshal women's abilities, which are fully acknowledged. The law of March 2010 fully assimilates women into the nation's decision-making circles. I think that we should perhaps stop talking about the advancement of women. We must raise women to the decision-making level, which will happen at the same time and on the basis of equality with men.

I could continue, but those examples are enough to demonstrate the pressing need for innovation.

In my capacity as current Chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference I must once again draw the attention of the international community to the resurgence of Islamophobia in certain sectors. In recent years outbursts of Islamophobia, as if in a process of escalation and provocation, have multiplied: profanations of tombs and of the Holy Koran, hate speech and blasphemous caricatures. All these incidents in fact give expansive proof of the small-mindedness, ignorance and intellectual and moral bankruptcy of their authors. On behalf of the Islamic umma, I strongly denounce and condemn these irresponsible and absurd acts. In any case, with regard to the Holy Koran, God himself has made himself infallible protector of his holy word, as it is said, "Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian" (*The Holy Koran, XV:9*).

I would like everyone to understand that Islam and Muslims are no one's enemy. Islam is a religion of the golden mean, which teaches moderation, which exhorts us to do good, which preaches respect for diversity and peaceful coexistence among peoples, whatever their religion. Still today it is in strict observance of these rules that nearly 2.5 billion Muslims throughout the world practice their faith. If there is a tiny minority that descends to violence in the name of the Koran, we say: No, that is in keeping neither with the letter nor the spirit of the Koran.

I reaffirm the openness of the Islamic umma to dialogue and joint effort. In the face of extremists of all sides, who want to take religions and believers hostage, I invite world leaders, opinion-makers, men, women and young people to join us to converse, explain, inform and educate, to promote the choice of wisdom, knowledge, reason, logic and doing good against obscurantism and confrontation. I hope that from that choice will come mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence between peoples, civilizations and cultures, respecting each other's beliefs and diversity.

At Dakar, we have organized the Conference of African Ulema, a group of Islamic scholars who are responding to those who want to use our religion for political ends. That African conference will culminate in a conference of all the countries of the umma, to be held in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

Right now I direct my hope towards the establishment of a Palestinian State with internationally recognized borders. That is why I support President Obama's initiative on Palestinian-Israeli dialogue and renew my long-standing support for the legitimate demand of the Palestinian people for a sovereign, independent and viable State. We support the vision of a Palestinian State that will be a full member of the United Nations, which has been promised here by President Obama.

Faced with the tragedy that has struck the Haitian people, Senegal has joined its efforts with those of the international community to provide emergency assistance. In October we will be receiving some 160 Haitian students who wish to study in Senegal, and next year we expect to be hosting Haitian families. From this rostrum I appeal to all, and in particular to African heads of State, to help Haiti. Those who want to host students should speak to us: I have sent commission to Haiti, and I have tasked a minister to be in charge of Haitian affairs. We have a roster of 3,000 young people who have been chosen by university teachers, about whom we have all the necessary information, including health information.

In Africa, Senegal notes with satisfaction the progress of our brother people of Côte d'Ivoire towards national reconciliation and the upcoming holding of elections in peace and calm. In Guinea, another neighbour of Senegal, where I have visited many times to help normalize the situation, I salute the efforts of the facilitator, President Blaise Compaoré. I invite once

again all Guinean stakeholders, in particular the two candidates in the second round, to complete the electoral process, so that there can be a permanent return to constitutional order, in national peace and harmony — which are essential conditions for development.

Senegal is also pleased with the progress made by the Niger to re-establish the country's political institutions. Guinea-Bissau, another neighbour of ours, has made significant progress since its election last year of President Malam Bacai Sanhá. But its democratic institutions remain fragile and therefore need more resolute support from the international community. In line with the conclusions of the extraordinary summit of the Economic Community of West African States held on 17 September, Senegal is prepared to take part in the efforts of our regional organization for the establishment of a programme for security and defence sector reform in Guinea-Bissau.

In the Sudan, Senegal remains committed to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. We hope that the referendum on self-determination of the south will be held in the best conditions possible in order to prevent a domino effect that would be harmful to the whole of Africa. Perhaps a group of heads of State could help to work towards that goal.

I would like to conclude by recalling that Senegal will host, from 10 to 31 December, the third World Festival of Black Arts, after the first two, which were held in Dakar in 1966 and Lagos in 1977. This gathering is a reaffirmation of the artistic, cultural and intellectual identity of the black world, and it carries a message of openness, dialogue and fraternity from Africa and its diaspora to the whole of humanity, for the respect of all cultures and civilizations. All are cordially invited.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Senegal for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Finland.

Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Halonen: Let me start by congratulating Ambassador Deiss on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I assure him of Finland's full support for his leadership.

Climate issues and the recent financial, economic and food crises call for change. The world needs an understanding of global development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Both developing and developed countries wish for economic growth. But the growth needs to be green, equitable and inclusive. It must create jobs and promote opportunities for decent work and a better life for everyone.

Basic social protection is everyone's right and an important element of sustainable development. But the most vulnerable need our special attention. We need to do much more to combat discrimination and exclusion.

Current consumption and production patterns need to be revised in many countries. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, there is enough in the world for everyone's need, but there cannot be enough for everybody's greed. Our stocktaking of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) showed that there has been progress but that it remains uneven. We agreed to redouble our efforts. The MDGs must become part of our everyday work, and we all need to deliver on our commitments. The Millennium Development Goals are reachable by the year 2015. What we want, we can reach.

Our common work with the ecological welfare of the world has continued. Promoting biodiversity is vital for sustaining the ecosystems that our lives depend on. Preventing the loss of biodiversity is of great importance for climate change mitigation, ensuring food and water security and eradicating poverty. The high-level meeting as a contribution to the

International Year of Biodiversity, confirming our commitment to that goal, was a good step forward.

The impacts of climate change are more and more visible and affect us all around the globe. Today I want to focus on the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States and the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Climate change is a hard reality for them. Mitigating and adapting to its effects is crucial for their survival.

Finland is committed to a new, ambitious climate agreement. All of us must work hard to ensure a global deal and commit to building a sustainable future, thus responding to what the Secretary-General so pertinently calls the 50-50-50 challenge. In order to reach our goals, we must mobilize all available resources. Cooperation to tackle climate change must involve States, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and all of our fellow global citizens.

Lasting solutions to global challenges cannot be found without the active participation of women in decision-making at all levels. Women are agents of change and development. Investing in women and girls has a vital effect on the eradication of poverty and sustained economic growth. Having heard the discussions this week, I am happy to conclude that there has clearly been a breakthrough in this respect. I could even call it mainstreaming. This is a good basis to continue from. Women and men together can achieve truly sustainable development.

The United Nations has to lead global efforts to promote a new blueprint for sustainable growth and low-carbon prosperity. I am honoured to co-chair the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability together with my colleague, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. We will, I promise, work hard.

All human rights are equally important and must be enjoyed by everyone without discrimination. The protection and promotion of human rights must be an integral part of peacebuilding and crisis management.

In combating impunity, justice must always go hand in hand with peace efforts. Finland firmly supports the International Criminal Court in its work in bringing to justice those responsible for the most serious crimes. We call on all States parties to the Rome Statute to uphold their international legal obligations under the Statute.

The Human Rights Council was created in 2006 to promote the respect for human rights, and its functioning will now be reviewed. To achieve tangible results, the Human Rights Council needs effective tools. The independent thematic country-specific mandates continue to be vital in order to achieve the full implementation of human rights for all.

The commitment of all the United Nations Member States to strengthen the promotion of women's rights, gender equality and gender mainstreaming is welcome. Finland strongly supports the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and would like to congratulate President Michelle Bachelet on her appointment. We must ensure that UN Women becomes a strong advocate and actor for women's rights throughout the work of the United Nations.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Concrete improvements have been made, but we must step up our efforts to further turn the objectives into practice. National action plans are valuable tools for implementing the resolution. Finland completed its own plan in 2008, and we have now started a twinning initiative with Kenya.

We need a comprehensive approach which integrates both long-term development programmes and conflict resolution. In our common efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, the contribution of regional organizations is valuable. Civil society can also play a role. Finland supports the development of the peace mediation activities of the United Nations.

After several rounds of proximity talks in the Middle East, the parties started direct talks in September. The international community has welcomed this wise decision. We now stand ready to give our support whenever needed.

Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Finland is greatly encouraged by the New START agreement and by the outcomes of the Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington, and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The world community must seize the moment. Global and bilateral efforts must be continued towards a world without nuclear weapons.

The United Nations remains the only forum where we can solve our common problems together. Therefore, we must continue to reform our Organization and increase its effectiveness without forgetting our own responsibilities as Member States. This is absolutely necessary, because we need to tackle the food crisis, the financial crisis, various kinds of natural disasters, contagious diseases, terrorism and armed conflicts in different parts of the world, as well as meeting our common challenge of climate change.

Combating everyday crises and working, at the same time, for sustainable development is a huge task. But no other choice has been given to us. That is why we have to combine our efforts for a better world — and do it now.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Finland for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Toribiong: Last September, I had the privilege of addressing this Assembly for the first time as Palau's Head of State (see A/64/PV.7). It is an honour for me to do so once again this year.

Palau's national story is one of achievement and success. Palau was the last country to emerge from United Nations trusteeship. The Constitution of our new country incorporated the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a testament to the efficacy of the United Nations. The United Nations also helped us form a strong partnership with the United States of America, our former Administering Authority. This partnership was renewed on 3 September when the United States and Palau entered into a new agreement that will assist Palau in its efforts to achieve economic self-sufficiency, and for this we express our profound gratitude to the United States of America.

Palau is also proud of our role in the international community, joining international conventions and meeting our international obligations. Our officers are helping to maintain peace in fragile States. We have deployed peacekeepers to Darfur, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands.

For Palau, environmental sustainability is not a recent construct. Respect for the environment and its preservation is Palau's most deeply ingrained tradition and is at the heart of our culture. Palauans have always known that caring for the long-term health of the environment is the foundation of our progress and survival.

With our traditions as our bedrock, I am pleased to say that Palau has virtually achieved our Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets, according to the United Nations-sanctioned report. Palau has succeeded in achieving universal literacy, gender equality, maternal health and access to education. We have eliminated poverty and hunger and reduced child mortality to a degree comparable to even the most advanced developed countries. We thank, among others, our closest friends and allies: first the United States, then Japan and the Republic of China on Taiwan for helping us reach this point.

We consider the MDGs to be a minimum, and we will continue to strive for higher goals, including the goal of combating the ever-increasing spread of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and obesity, which the Pacific Islands Health Officers Association has declared a regional epidemic in the Pacific.

We are a small country, but blessed in many ways. I reiterate that we have risen to achieve the MDGs by caring for our God-given resources. We have put in place a system domestically to conserve and preserve our terrestrial and marine biodiversity. We have also joined with our Pacific neighbours to address the health of our oceans together through the Pacific Oceanscape programme.

Palau, and indeed the entire world, is connected by a web of life that is in peril. For too long, we have focused our attention primarily on commercial interests. We have abused nature and must change our thinking. We must reorient our priorities to put biodiversity and the welfare of our ecosystems first. In so doing, we can serve both our long-term commercial interests and protect the natural bounty that sustains us.

One issue that symbolizes the threat to our biodiversity succinctly is the fight to conserve our oceans. Last year, I declared the world's first shark sanctuary from this podium. It was a good first step. I also advocated for an end to unsustainable, cruel and wasteful shark finning on the high seas at the resumed Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. We cannot accept the loss of 73 million sharks a year for a pot of soup.

Palau is doing all it can, but this work cannot stop at the boundary of any one country. We are all connected. This is why I am proud that President Lobo Sosa of Honduras and I signed this week a joint declaration calling on all other nations to stop unsustainable shark fishing.

Moreover, according to scientific studies, such as that entitled "Patterns and ecosystem consequences of shark declines in the ocean", the health of sharks is linked directly to the health of tuna. Palau and other countries rely on tuna as their principal fisheries resource, and the world community relies on it as an important food source. We must work together to ensure the continued viability of this important stock. This past year, I hosted a summit of the parties to the Nauru Agreement to take steps to ensure that tuna remains plentiful. Along with other leaders of countries parties to the Naura Agreement, we limited purse seine fishing, agreed to close the doughnut holes between our jurisdictions, and implemented a vessel day scheme. These are steps which we believe are vital to ensuring the continued viability of our stocks.

When Palau and other Pacific small island developing States (SIDs) joined together at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly to initiate resolution 63/281, "Climate change and its possible security implications", we did so recognizing that not only is climate change a development issue, but has now risen to the level of a security issue. The successful adoption of resolution 63/281 by consensus was a landmark occasion for Pacific SIDs and a step forward for the international community. The accelerating conflict and dislocation caused by climate events warrant an urgent response from the Security Council. We repeat our call for Security Council action on this resolution.

After personally visiting the Pacific islands earlier this year, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, convened an historic summit between the Arab League and the Pacific SIDs. The summit was a success. Our two regions, which had never before engaged bilaterally, found a new understanding of shared goals, culture and traditions. Palau is grateful to the League of Arab States for being the first regional group to recognize the potential of the Pacific SIDs as a strong, viable and cohesive unit.

We are hopeful that this is the year when we will make substantive progress on Security Council reform. Our position on the issue has been stated clearly and continually in the negotiation room. If we as an organization are to maintain our relevance, we must reform the Council so that its membership reflects the ever-evolving membership of the General Assembly. Palau strongly supports expanding Security Council membership, particularly by adding Japan as a permanent member.

On the issue of security, Palau is hopeful that the return of Israelis and Palestinians this month to the negotiating table will bear fruit. The crucible of the world's Abrahamic faiths should not be the land of so much turmoil. The resolution of this intractable problem is of the utmost importance so that the region and its reality may reflect its historic message of peace on Earth. Palau can only add its voice to the chorus of support for a just, comprehensive and regional solution in accordance with the Road Map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We welcome the opportunity to actively support the process in the General Assembly this fall. Indeed, world peace hinges on peace in the Middle East.

Palau also supports the efforts of the international community on disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Palau's was the world's first nuclear-free Constitution, and so the elimination of nuclear weapons is of special concern to us. Having experienced the horror and devastation of war, we and our neighbours long for the day when the entire world is free of nuclear weapons. We therefore

welcome all efforts to add the Middle East to the list of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The SARS pandemic shone a bright light on the gaps in our collective ability to prevent the spread of diseases internationally. With the participation of Taiwan, we can now help to fill those gaps. We congratulate the world community on making itself healthier by granting Taiwan observer status at the World Health Assembly. Given the importance of a universal approach to global problems, Palau advocates for Taiwan's inclusion in the activities of the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The world needs its input to ensure civil aviation safety and security, and to effectively tackle climate change for the benefit of all.

When I began my address, I related the success story that was Palau's emergence from trusteeship. As I wind down my remarks, I will speak candidly about our challenges. Today, Palau still feels the pain from the wounds inflicted during our colonial days. Damage was done to our islands. One, for example, was stripped of much of its resources, making it difficult for those who live there to sustain the livelihood they once enjoyed. This happened to our once phosphate-rich island of Angaur. We call on the international community for appropriate relief for this historic and lasting injury — a relief that will heal the gaping wounds on our island, ease our pain and bring justice to our people.

In addition, as a result of the fierce battles fought over our islands during the Second World War, explosives were rained down on our land. Some of those explosives still lie there, live, and pose an extreme danger to the lives and limbs of our people. We appeal to the conscience of the world, especially those responsible, to remove this danger from our midst.

As a developing nation, Palau is thankful for the grants provided to us by our allies, friends and partners. They have been invaluable. But our developing economy faces a crisis that grants alone cannot address. Without a strong local economy based on private enterprise and the free market, our young people will continue to leave our shores to pursue better employment abroad. We need more than just humanitarian grants; we need private investment to spur and sustain our economic development. I therefore invite investors and entrepreneurs from all over the world to come to Palau to invest and establish partnerships with our talented people, so that we can create a vibrant economy for now and for our future.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Palau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Christofias (*spoke in Greek; English text provided by the delegation*): I congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

It is commonly acknowledged that the international community faces challenges that are multiplying in scope and magnitude. This raises a question about whether our ability to respond to these challenges grows in tandem. We have recently witnessed climatic and natural disasters on a scale never experienced in recent history, such as the floods in Pakistan, the fires in Russia, the earthquake in Haiti and the landslides in China.

Environmental degradation and climate change; rising poverty, food insecurity and the lack of basic health care for so many of our fellow human beings in a world with deep social disparities; terrorism; the visible threat of nuclear proliferation, especially in the Middle East; and the continuing economic crisis of the past few years, which has primarily affected millions of working people and the poor, require effective regional and global action through the United Nations and other multilateral organizations.

Turning our attention to my own neighbourhood, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, I would like to welcome the relaunching of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and to express hope for a successful outcome. We all know that it is a difficult task, but there is no alternative to dialogue. We express the hope that no unilateral measure will be taken that would create more obstacles to the negotiations to reach an agreement. The solution should lead to the creation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State living side by side with the State of Israel.

Cyprus, together with Greece, has proposed the creation of a humanitarian sea corridor to the people of Gaza, utilizing our proximity to the area and our good relations with all sides.

This year, Cyprus is celebrating the fiftieth year since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and its participation as a full Member of the United Nations. The Republic of Cyprus became a Member of the Organization as soon as it gained its independence in the hope and with the aspiration of contributing to the work of the Organization and playing a constructive role in international affairs through the promotion of the implementation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. With its unique geographic position at the crossroads of three continents, Cyprus held the noble goal of serving as a bridge for peace and cooperation in its neighbourhood and beyond.

Having gained its independence at a difficult period in world politics, Cyprus took a clear and conscious decision to join the Non-Aligned Movement. As a founding member of the Movement, Cyprus played an active role in the work of the United Nations and in resolving international problems. We have always held the view that problems cannot be resolved through military confrontation but must be solved through dialogue, diplomacy and respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of all countries and peoples, whether great or small, rich or poor.

In 2004, the Republic of Cyprus joined the European Union (EU) as a full member. Proud of its traditions, Cyprus preserves its neutrality and seeks to play an active and constructive role as an EU member State.

After Cyprus won independence in 1960, the road for Cypriots has not, unfortunately, been without problems. Despite many difficulties and misfortunes, we have managed to achieve economic growth and a satisfactory standard of living for our people. In the political field, however, the first years of independence were marked by difficulties and a lack of the necessary political cooperation between the two communities of the island, which were called to govern the country together under the Constitution. Those early differences and difficulties were exacerbated by foreign interference. The culmination of these interventions was the military coup of the junta that ruled Greece at the time, and the illegal Turkish invasion of July-August 1974. The military occupation by the Turkish Army of 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus continues today, as does the violation of the human rights of all Cypriot citizens, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

The people of Cyprus have suffered enough. It is time to overcome the problems, to achieve reconciliation between the two communities and to reunite our country and our people for the sake of peace and future generations.

The General Assembly and Security Council have been addressing the Cyprus problem since the 1960s. A number of resolutions have been adopted by both the Security Council and the General Assembly aimed at safeguarding the independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of the Republic of Cyprus. I take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the people of Cyprus to the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole for their continued and unwavering interest in Cyprus.

In 1977, Archbishop Makarios, the President of Cyprus at the time, accepted the evolution of the unitary State into a bicommunal, bizonal federation. That historic compromise was a brave concession by the Greek Cypriot community towards their Turkish Cypriot compatriots. It sought to bring an end to the foreign occupation and to restore the unity of the Republic of Cyprus. The composition of the population and the human geography of Cyprus were such that conditions for a federation did not exist. The two communities lived intermingled throughout the island. It is for that reason that the acceptance of the bicommunal, bizonal federation by the Greek Cypriots constituted a historic compromise and a concession towards our Turkish Cypriot compatriots.

After 1977, the Security Council through its resolutions endorsed the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus into a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality, defined not as numerical equality but as the effective participation of both communities in all organs of Government. The united federal State would be one, with a single sovereignty, a single citizenship and a single international personality. The federal State would respect fundamental human rights and basic freedoms in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The principles and values of the European Union would also be observed.

Since my election in 2008, I have actively engaged with the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community in a Cypriot-owned process within the framework of the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General in order to reach a mutually acceptable agreed solution on the constitutional and other internal aspects of the problem. Two years into the process and despite the difficulties, some progress, although not as much as anticipated, has been achieved on certain issues. At the outset of this process, we agreed with the Secretary-General that there would be no artificial deadlines or outside intervention in the form of arbitration or the submission of ready-made solutions.

With the new leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, we worked through the summer and, in the past few weeks, have further intensified our meetings. In order to achieve results soon, I have submitted a package consisting of three proposals. First, I have suggested linking the negotiation of the chapters of property, territorial adjustments and settlers in order to give impetus to the process. I have also proposed that when we are close to reaching an agreement on the internal aspects of the problem, we could hold an international conference under the auspices of the Secretary-General and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, the guarantor Powers, the European Union, the Republic of Cyprus and the two communities to discuss the international aspects of the problem.

The third element of my proposal concerns Famagusta. My series of proposals would benefit all sides and could create the necessary political climate to drive the entire process forward. Unfortunately, the new Turkish Cypriot leader and the Turkish leadership have rejected these proposals.

I would like to make a special reference here to our proposal on Famagusta. In 1974, Famagusta was a city with a population of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. As the Turkish Army advanced towards the city, the Greek Cypriot population was forced to flee. The town of Varosha has been a ghost town ever since. The Security Council considers the Government of Turkey responsible for the area, and in 1984, under resolution 550 (1984), demanded the return of the town to the United Nations in order that it might be inhabited by its legal inhabitants. Even before the adoption of resolution 550 (1984), the leaders of the two communities had agreed in 1979 to settle the issue of Famagusta as a matter of priority, notwithstanding any political negotiations on other issues.

My proposal, if accepted, would have benefits for all sides. In addition to the return of the fenced city to rightful inhabitants under United Nations control, my proposal includes the restoration of the medieval part of the city where our Turkish Cypriot compatriots live, as well as the opening of the port of Famagusta to external trade under EU supervision — a measure directly aimed at benefiting the Turkish Cypriots. Such a development would also benefit Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU and provide an excellent example of harmonious coexistence and cooperation between the two communities. From this rostrum, I would also like to propose that the National Guard and the Turkish Army again cancel their annual military exercises this autumn.

Turkey's leadership has assured the international community that it wants a solution of the problem by end of 2010. We are still waiting for its words to be transformed into action. The same expectation was repeatedly voiced by the European Council and in a recent resolution of the European Parliament. The European Union calls on Turkey to work on the basis of United Nations resolutions and to meet its obligations towards the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus, which Turkey still fails to recognize.

Turkey must respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and contribute to the achievement of an agreement that would reunite Cyprus and its people. Our vision is of a reunited Cyprus, common homeland of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, without any foreign troops or settlers on its territory and with full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its people.

Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians and Latins. I would like to reiterate my commitment to doing my utmost to that end.

From this rostrum, I repeat my call on the Turkish leadership to meet with me, in parallel to the negotiating process, so that I can share with them my vision for a solution of the Cyprus problem, which would serve the interests of the Cypriots, Turkey and Greece, as well as of peace and security in the region.

The challenges faced by the international community are increasing. Climate change, poverty, malnutrition and lack of access to basic health care, terrorism, wars, the threat of further nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, the economic crisis and political instability in many regions of the world require us to undertake a renewed and more effective effort to protect humankind's achievements. The future is in our hands. We will succeed only if we achieve a more just distribution and better redistribution of the world's natural resources and wealth.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Jonathan: I welcome this opportunity to address this Assembly for the first time since I was sworn in as President of my country, Nigeria, on 6 May this year.

I extend sincere congratulations to Mr. Joseph Deiss on his well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Allow me also to congratulate his predecessor on the skilful way in which he conducted the affairs of the Assembly during its sixty-fourth session. I also commend the Secretary-General for the quality of his leadership. I assure the President of the General Assembly of the support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation throughout his tenure.

This session coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of 17 African countries, including my country, Nigeria. It is true that the United Nations played an important role in the acceleration of decolonization, in part through the adoption of many resolutions supporting the right of nations to self-determination. The independence and subsequent admission of many of these countries into the United Nations has greatly enhanced the Organization's legitimacy, thereby advancing the noble goals of its Charter.

Nigeria was one of the countries to emerge from colonialism in 1960 into a whole new world of independence and sovereignty to take on the task of nation-building and to play the international role that destiny had conferred on us. Our participation in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo seven days after gaining our independence was the direct and deliberate fulfilment of the international role that we had set for ourselves as a people. Since then, we have participated in numerous United Nations peacekeeping missions, as well as in similar regional endeavours. Nigeria has been and will continue to be an active participant in the work of the United Nations, striving therein to promote national, regional and global objectives.

Despite many years of independence, many countries still face the daunting challenges of nation-building. It is in this connection that the Millennium Summit of 2000 adopted a set of goals to be realized by 2015. The outcome of the events related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that took place recently here in New York inspires a real appreciation of the enormous scope of the task ahead for many countries, including ours. The urgency of the action needed to address the situation has been clearly

and unambiguously underscored in the intervening discussions.

Even though we have achieved significant improvements in the eradication of polio and other child-related diseases, Nigeria still has its own fair share of challenges to overcome. Progress on MDGs 4 and 5, which relate to the reduction of maternal and child mortality, has been relatively slow. The weakness of the primary health care system and limited referral institutions remain crucial challenges in the health care sector.

On the positive side, Nigeria has recorded remarkable progress in the provision of universal basic education, and we are also in the process of harmonizing baseline data that will assist us in the proper monitoring and evaluation of all MDG projects.

The Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria continues to be a prime mechanism for addressing Millennium Development Goal 6. Accordingly, Nigeria will remain both a donor nation to and a recipient of the Fund. Having actively participated during the first and second replenishments with total contributions of $20 million, Nigeria will make further contributions of $10 million during the third replenishment. We will also call for the Muskoka commitment to be met now, and the Global Fund to be expanded to include MDGs 4 and 5 in support of the Secretary-General's Every Woman, Every Child initiative.

Good governance, strict adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights remain fundamental tenets of my administration. The consolidation and safeguarding of our democracy are a task on which we are beginning to see positive results. The smooth succession of power since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, including my own ascension to the presidency of our country after the demise of my predecessor, is evidence of the commitment of all stakeholders to democratic governance in the knowledge that political stability is imperative to the economic development of any nation.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our independence in a few days, we remember the sacrifices of the founding fathers of our nation, as well as our own responsibility to present and future generations. In fulfilment of these aspirations, we are firmly committed to holding free, fair and credible elections during the 2011 general elections. In this regard, we have taken the steps necessary to ensure the success of the process. I assure the Assembly that every vote will count in Nigeria.

We are also working to strengthen our institutional structures for combating corruption, financial crimes, and other vices, such as human and drug trafficking. We are reforming the financial sector to make it more accountable and transparent. This will ensure that our country enjoys political stability, social harmony and economic growth.

In support of our commitment to the global effort to combat terrorism, we continue to strengthen and expand our institutional capacities to tackle all forms of extremism. In fact, we currently have two bills — a counter-terrorism bill and an anti-money laundering bill — before our National Assembly, and I am confident they will be enacted into law before the end of the current legislative year.

Soon after I assumed the leadership of my country as acting President, I was invited by the President of the United States of America to a mini-summit on nuclear disarmament in Washington, D.C., in April this year. Like all previous Nigerian leaders, I share the American President's vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, and I will continue to collaborate with him and all humankind for the realization of this laudable goal. Our support for and active participation in the adoption of the Pelindaba Treaty is evidence of our commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This conforms with our status as a signatory to the major treaties on nuclear disarmament.

At the same time, small arms and light weapons have destabilized the African continent, fuelled and prolonged conflicts, and obstructed relief programmes. They have also undermined peace initiatives, increased human rights abuses, hampered development and, perhaps more worrisome, fostered a culture of organized crime and violence. We note, however, that the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons do not receive adequate attention. Nigeria calls on the United Nations to take firm action to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons by adopting an arms trade treaty.

It is estimated that there are approximately 100 million of these weapons in sub-Saharan Africa alone. These weapons have been identified as having killed more people in the African continent than any other type of weapon. However, unlike for nuclear, chemical

and biological weapons, there are no global treaties or legally binding instruments for dealing with the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons. It must be underscored that the dumping of these weapons in Africa and their free use are among the greatest challenges facing African leaders today. These weapons encourage impunity, transborder crime, armed robbery, piracy, kidnapping and the rape of innocent women. In general, their presence hampers economic growth because no one wants to invest in a nation or region that is prone to crisis. We know of approximately 300 companies that produce and trade such small arms and light weapons in approximately 50 countries around the world. And we believe that it is time for the United Nations to come on strong if it truly wants to help Africa get out of the woods.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, I am pleased to report that we have made substantial progress in bringing peace and stability to countries in the Community that were until recently embroiled in political crises. This has greatly improved the situation across the subregion, which in turn has enhanced the peace and security that are critical to development. We will continue to build on these achievements to consolidate stability and engender prosperity in the subregion.

Nigeria chose the theme of preventive diplomacy for an open debate it convened during its presidency of the Security Council in July 2010 (see S/PV.6360) to highlight the importance that it attaches to conflict prevention. It is obvious that preventing conflicts is a cheaper option for maintaining peace and security than peacekeeping. I urge the United Nations to devote renewed attention to preventive diplomacy. The increasing financial burden of peacekeeping and the high human cost of conflict are good reasons for the United Nations to pursue with vigour the adoption of preventive diplomacy in the spirit of the provisions of Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

For Nigeria, a major contributor of troops to peacekeeping operations around the world, it is essential that the rules of engagement be reviewed to prevent high casualty rates among contingents. It deeply saddens us to see troops wearing the United Nations colours being waylaid and murdered because of the rules of engagement.

The theme for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — is timely and appropriate. The need for the United Nations to provide leadership in addressing problems and challenges of a global nature is imperative. We urge the Organization to quicken the pace of reform, not only to better reflect current global realities, but also to ensure that it enjoys genuine legitimacy. Good governance requires participation by all nations and all peoples of the world.

The early reform and, in particular, expansion of the Security Council will accord the United Nations greater effectiveness in global good governance. The exclusion of the African States from the Council's permanent membership category can no longer be justified.

I would like to reaffirm Nigeria's abiding faith in the role of the United Nations in the pursuit of our common goals for the benefit of all humankind. We therefore pledge our continued support for the Organization, in order to strengthen it, as a way of identifying with the ideals for which it stands.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all Member States for their kind words of condolence and sympathy in honour of the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua at an Assembly meeting last May (see A/64/PV.86). Even though he is gone, his legacy lives on, as my Administration continues to implement the programmes we had jointly designed during his time as President of our country and while I was second-in-command. May his soul rest in peace.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Nicholas Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister

of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Clegg (United Kingdom): The nations represented here know how deeply the world has changed in the six and a half decades since the United Nations was formed; since the spirit of international citizenship, of peoples and nations combining their energies to solve our shared problems, gave birth to the United Nations. Today, that spirit is needed more than ever.

All of us have to respond to a world that is profoundly altered. As a community of nations, we face three profound challenges: a redrawing of the map of power, including a big shift in economic power; the globalization of problems, not least terrorism and climate change; and increasingly fluid forms of identity and the rapid circulation and potency of new ideas. Taken together, these mean that we are in a new world. All three demand matching responses. So we must reform and renew our multilateral institutions in line with the changing map of power, strengthen our actions on international peacebuilding, climate change and development, and promote liberal values and human rights to win the conflict of ideas.

The truth is that in all three of these areas we are not doing anything like as well as we must. The effectiveness of multilateral approaches is in question in the wake of the financial crisis, the failure of the climate change talks in Copenhagen and the stalling of the Doha Trade Round. And too many nations and international institutions have been too reticent about promoting enlightened human values. We need to inject new life into our institutions and new confidence into the expression of our ideals.

Turning first to the altered geography of power, it is an often-stated fact that the old economic order is being transformed and that what were once labelled emerging economies are now, in many cases, global economic players. The distribution of military power, too, is altering, so power is being wielded in different places and in different ways. This power shift requires us to reform our international institutions, to reinforce the rule of international law, and to free up international trade.

In recent years, our multinational institutions have sometimes struggled to adapt to the new circumstances, so reform is essential. And a good place to start is right here at the United Nations. The Security Council must be reformed to reflect the new geography of power. The United Kingdom is clear and unambiguous in our support for permanent seats for Brazil, India, Germany and Japan, and for African representation. Put simply, the United Nations cannot speak for the many if it only hears the voices of the few. We welcome the priority that the President has promised to give to the Assembly's continuing negotiations on this issue.

Closer cooperation on counter-terrorism is also vital, and we welcome the Assembly's affirmation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We must stand shoulder to shoulder in the struggle against terrorism.

The United Kingdom will always champion the United Nations. If it did not exist, we would have to invent it. But let us be frank. Without a radical overhaul, the United Nations will not provide the leadership the world seeks from it and needs from it. It is also important that the vital role of the European Union in promoting development and prosperity be adequately represented in the Assembly.

The redrawing of the power map also makes it even more important that the writ of international law extend across the world. Laws are the solid representation of our collective values. That is why it is so important that we uphold and reinforce the instruments of international justice, including the International Criminal Court and specific tribunals, such as those for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

I strongly welcome the comments of President Obama yesterday on the vital importance of the Middle East peace process. I can assure the Assembly that the United Kingdom is committed to helping lead to the end of hostilities that have been so profoundly damaging for all sides.

The prevention of nuclear-weapons proliferation is another huge priority for the international community. The United Kingdom welcomes the success of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons this May, and I can assure the Assembly that we will continue to play our part in making the world safer from the threat of nuclear weapons.

I was ready today to welcome the progress made in this week's meeting of the E3+3 group on Iran. I was ready to also straightforwardly reiterate our

concerns about Iran's nuclear programme. But instead, once again, an issue of grave global concern has been overshadowed by the bizarre, offensive and attention-grabbing pronouncements by President Ahmadinejad from this rostrum yesterday. His remarks were intended to distract attention from Iran's obligations and to generate media headlines. They deserve to do neither.

The reshaped world of power also increases the need to open our borders to free trade. A trading world is a safer world. A world trade deal, which is within reach, would be worth $170 billion annually to the world economy. Two years ago we were very close, but we failed to seal the deal. We simply cannot afford protectionism. Today, we have to recognize that we will need an even more ambitious deal than we envisaged then if we are to get an agreement. Greater access to markets, particularly for least developed countries' exports of agriculture, supports growth and reduces poverty.

The second of the three big shifts we have to adapt to is the globalization of many of our problems and of many of the solutions to those problems. Our economies are, of course, tied ever more closely together, as recent events have dramatically proven. Prosperity and poverty in one part of the world impact on economic activity and security elsewhere.

Diseases can span the globe in a matter of days. Terrorism is conducted by international networks across the world. Environmental threats do not respect borders. We are used to thinking about stateless people. We have to get used to the idea of stateless problems, too. Conflict takes place between, across and within national boundaries, but wherever it takes place it can threaten the interests of all nations. Conflict undermines our collective prosperity and destroys development. We must work harder to prevent conflict by tackling the sources of violence. And where conflict does break out, we must be ready to help resolve it.

So let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of United Nations peacekeepers to laying the foundations for sustainable peace around the world. We owe them all, and the Governments that provide them, a great debt of gratitude. The United Kingdom, along with France and other partners, has been at the forefront of supporting and encouraging United Nations efforts to deliver more strategic and effective peacekeeping. We will continue to provide that support.

But peacekeeping alone is not the answer. We need peacebuilding, too. The United Nations is uniquely placed not only to keep the peace, but also to make it last. Effective peacebuilding can address the underlying causes of conflict and strengthen local, regional and national capacity to contribute to long-term stability in fragile States.

The coming year will see some significant challenges to the United Nations efforts to promote international peace, justice and security: in the Sudan, where we will see a referendum on the future of Southern Sudan, while continuing to look for progress on justice in Darfur and more widely; in Somalia, where the African Union peacekeeping mission is playing a brave and crucial role, and where the leadership of the United Nations could be decisive; and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where much progress has been made but where we have seen again in recent weeks how much more remains to be done to achieve real security and stability for many of its hard-pressed people.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the mission to bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan. Afghans are increasingly taking responsibility for their own affairs. This year's Kabul Conference and, most recently, parliamentary elections have demonstrated Afghan commitment. Challenges remain, but progress is being made. The United Kingdom will continue to work with its international partners to support Afghans to build a better Afghanistan.

The United Kingdom is wholehearted in our support for international development. Like many nations, we are having to take tough action to reduce our financial deficits, but we are not budging a millimetre from our commitment to development. We are standing by our promise to devote 0.7 per cent of gross national income to international development assistance from 2013, and we will enshrine this commitment in law.

When disaster strikes, we must respond quickly and generously. Right now, Pakistan faces a humanitarian disaster of unimaginable proportions. As the Secretary-General has said, this is the largest disaster in the 65-year history of the United Nations. So we must ensure that the United Nations appeal is properly funded to cover both humanitarian relief and reconstruction, and we must ensure that there is enough

support over the long term, not least in helping Pakistan to achieve the levels of economic growth that will allow the country to rebuild itself. I am very proud, as the representative of a European Union (EU) member State, that the EU has recently shown real leadership in promising to look at improving trade access for Pakistan in response to the disaster. I very much hope that others can follow suit.

So, economic power has shifted and problems have globalized, but at the same time the power of ideas has grown enormously. Identities have become more fluid. It is not possible to put people into neatly labelled national boxes any more. This means that winning the battle of ideas is as important as military prowess.

The work of international institutions must continue to be guided by the values on which those institutions were founded: the rule of law, both domestic and international; the right to freedom of expression and belief; democracy; and equality before the law. These values are sometimes described as Western values, but only by people who do not know their history. Four centuries ago, the great Mughal emperor Akbar was legislating for religious freedom and equality in what is now India, while in parts of Europe heretics were being burned at the stake. The truth is that these liberal values of equality, law and self-determination cannot be claimed by any nation or hemisphere. They are global values with global force. They are also the values at the heart of the United Nations Charter.

We should never apologize for promoting the idea that women and men are equal; never flinch from insisting that Governments chosen by their people are better; never shy away from our insistence that nobody should be silenced because of their religion or beliefs.

The United Kingdom will therefore continue to push for human rights across the world. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, the United Nations has developed a global legal framework of human rights standards. We want to see the Human Rights Council do more to ensure that States implement their obligations and use the 2011 review to improve the Council's ability to respond effectively to situations of concern, such as the outrageous abuse of democracy and human rights in Burma.

United Kingdom foreign policy will be shaped by the three big challenges I have set out today: a power shift, the globalization of problems, and the rapid circulation and potency of ideas. The United Kingdom Government will fearlessly promote our ideals and interests while remaining realistic in our approach.

This is the spirit in which the United Kingdom Government is conducting a root-and-branch review of our own strategic defence and security policy. Our last review took place in 1998, but the world has changed, along with the character of the threats we face. This is not to say that we did not face grave threats before, but they were more fixed, more visible and more predictable. Today, the threats to our security are not rooted in specific States. They are more fluid and often less visible: terrorism, organized crime, or attacks from cyberspace. We must judge our security not by our ability to deal with what we know, but how able we are to respond to unpredictable threats.

The United Kingdom will also show leadership by example. As fierce advocates of the international rule of law, we will practice what we preach. No nation can insist on the law and then act as though it is above it. But our approach will also be hard-headed and realistic. In recent years we have learned — in same cases the hard way — that democracy cannot be created by diktat. Freedom cannot be commanded into existence.

The new coalition Government, now five-months old, will restore Britain's international reputation by pursuing a hard-headed foreign policy based on liberal values.

The world has changed, but the values that should guide us have not. We have to renew our international institutions in line with the new realities of world power and influence, and fearlessly project the ideals of democracy, equality and freedom. Great things are demanded of us. Great things are necessary from us. It falls to our generation of leaders to meet these challenges together.

Address by His Highness Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

His Highness Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Highness Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Al-Sabah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure at the outset to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss sincerely on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. As he represents the friendly Swiss Confederation, I shall now say a few words on behalf of the people of Kuwait in one of the official languages of his country.

(*spoke in French*)

Allow me, on behalf of the people of Kuwait and myself, to congratulate Mr. Deiss on his election. We are certain that, thanks to his wisdom and experience, coupled with the prestigious standing of his friendly country, the Swiss Confederation, with which we enjoy a very solid relationship on the international stage, our deliberations will be crowned with success.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Also, I cannot but commend the sincere efforts of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, and express our utmost thanks and appreciation to him for the successful and distinguished way in which he conducted the work of the previous session.

I also wish to express our great pride in the sincere efforts of His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to achieve the international purposes and principles we are all pursuing in order to strengthen the concepts of international cooperation and respect for international legitimacy, as well as to foster the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Soon we shall be celebrating the sixty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It is our hope that the success story of the United Nations will continue for many years to come, not only because it is considered the best multilateral international mechanism there is, but also because it is the most legitimate, neutral and credible institution. Over the span of six decades it has demonstrated its ability to prevent destructive wars and maintain international peace and security.

However, since the challenges and threats facing the international community are increasing rather than decreasing and are becoming more tangled and complex, the role of the Organization has had to be expanded and strengthened in importance and vitality in order to deal with social crises and problems. Those include poverty and hunger, the spread of diseases and epidemics, the scourge of drug trafficking and organized crime and violations of human rights. Economic problems must be confronted, including the increase in food prices and the global economic and financial crisis, and security challenges — such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ongoing armed conflicts in a number of regions of the world — must be addressed.

Together, over the past two years all those different challenges have contributed to wiping out much of the progress and gains that a great number of developing countries had made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Natural disasters have also had a destructive effect on the economies of many developing countries, causing tremendous loss of life and of property. The most striking examples were the earthquake that hit Haiti last January and the floods that swept Pakistan last month.

There is no doubt that plenty of work remains to be done to limit the dangers of the climate change phenomenon. We hope the conference in Cancún, Mexico in November will provide us with the opportunity to reach a binding agreement that will determine the required goals, the time frame for their fulfilment, the responsibilities of Member States, and the joint action mechanisms for guaranteeing the financing and technology transfer commitments from developed to developing countries to help them adapt to climate change and cope with its impact.

Without doubt, those challenges require continued reform and improvement of the organs, agencies and programmes of the United Nations, so as to keep pace with the changes in international relations and to improve their performance.

In that regard, we welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/289, entitled "System-wide coherence". It established a new composite entity — UN Women — to foster international efforts to accelerate gender equality and women's

empowerment and created a Deputy Secretary-General position for this purpose.

On another topic, we believe that after 17 years of negotiations to reform the Security Council, it is high time to take the necessary steps to improve and develop the work of the Council and make it more transparent. Its membership must be expanded in accordance with standards and controls that would achieve a fair balance in representation and efficiency in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities. Such measures should also guarantee the right of the Arab and Muslim States to be represented in a manner that reflects their size, their contributions and their role in defending the purposes and principles of the Charter.

In affirmation of its steadfast support for the efforts and activities of the United Nations in various fields, the State of Kuwait has continued to extend a helping hand to the needy in different parts of the world. Furthermore, in consolidating the principles of Kuwait's foreign policy, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has continued to provide — as it has for the past five decades — assistance and grants, which to date have benefited more than 100 countries all over the world with concessionary loans totalling $14.5 billion. That is equivalent to 1.31 per cent of Kuwait's gross national product — twice the level of official development assistance agreed upon internationally.

Based on Kuwait's firm belief in the vitally important role of the United Nations in easing the human suffering resulting from natural disasters or conflicts, Kuwait has decided to increase almost five-fold its voluntary contributions to a number of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Kuwait will do so out of its desire to support those humanitarian activities and to deepen its joint cooperation with the United Nations.

As we celebrate the golden jubilee of our independence, and in implementation of the desire of His Highness the Emir of the State of Kuwait to transform the country into a regional financial and trade centre, a development plan has been approved for the period 2010 to 2014. A budget of almost $115 billion has been allocated to develop infrastructure, build ports and railways and construct new cities, as well as to continue to work to improve the level of basic services provided to citizens and residents alike.

In that context, the State of Kuwait is proud to be a leader, in the Arab world and internationally, in terms of the quality of education, living standards and health care services, as well as in the fields of gender equality, economic achievement and political freedoms, according to rankings issued by international organizations, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Twenty years have now passed since the invasion and occupation of the State of Kuwait by the former Iraqi regime. It is a painful anniversary that we and our brothers in Iraq are determined to overcome by laying the foundations for stable relations based on the principles of the mutual respect for sovereignty, independence, good neighbourliness and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. We will seek to resolve all differences by peaceful means, to respect all resolutions of international legitimacy and to implement remaining commitments stipulated by relevant Security Council resolutions.

The State of Kuwait is optimistic regarding future relations between the two countries and is totally ready to provide all sorts of support to assist the Iraqi Government in its efforts to enforce security and stability and to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as to rebuild the various State sectors that have suffered as a result of the adventures of the former regime and its hostile expansionist policies.

In that regard, we hope that the ongoing negotiations between the different parties and political forces in Iraq will lead to the formation of a Government of national unity that represents the entire spectrum of Iraqi society and all its political components. Such a Government should be able to address the country's security, political and economic challenges and fulfil the needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people to build a free, democratic and unified Iraq living in peace with itself and its neighbours and contributing to the consolidation of the pillars of security and stability in the region.

The State of Kuwait, in its capacity as Chair of the current session of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), hopes that communication at all levels will continue between the sisterly United Arab Emirates and the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran to seek a resolution to the conflict over the occupied Emarati Islands, in line with the principles and norms of

international law and on the basis of good-neighbourly relations, as set out in the resolutions issued by GCC summits and ministerial meetings.

While the State of Kuwait affirms the right of States to utilize nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, we call on all States with such programmes to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to take whatever steps are necessary to build confidence so as to reassure the international community about the nature of their nuclear programmes, in line with resolutions of international legitimacy. We also emphasize the need to resolve those issues peacefully through diplomatic means and direct negotiations between the parties concerned. That will pave the way to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, in implementation of the resolution adopted at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference held at the United Nations Headquarters last May.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is considered the gravest threat to peace and security in the Middle East region. The failure of the United Nations over the past six decades to find a solution to that pivotal issue has contributed to the complication of the Palestine question and has prompted Israel, the occupying Power, to persist in its disrespect of international legitimacy. Israel has also persisted in its settlement policy, imposed a siege on Gaza and destroyed the landmarks of Jerusalem in order to Judaize it.

Moreover, instead of welcoming the Arab Peace Initiative as a strategic choice and the nucleus of the peace process in the Middle East, Israel has continued to confiscate territory and to torture and detain unarmed Palestinian civilians. It has used the rockets launched against it as a pretext to launch savage wars and to use excessive force. All of that is in addition to its arrogant attack on the Turkish freedom flotilla in international waters.

Israel is confident of its impunity and thus commits crimes continuously and systematically, without any adequate response from the international community to its arrogance. We therefore reaffirm the responsibility of the international community and of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security, as well as to deal seriously and sternly with Israel and force it to comply with the international will.

We hope that the direct negotiations that began at the start of this month between the Palestinian Authority and Israel will lead to the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and the establishment of a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We also renew our full support to the Syrian Arab Republic in regaining its occupied lands in the Golan and the return to the line of 4 June 1967. We also stress the need for implementing Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and putting an end to repeated Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and of the Blue Line of separation. We also emphasize the need for Israel to withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories.

The peoples of the world want to live in a clean, safe and stable environment. In recent decades, we have been able to enact numerous international agreements and conventions under the umbrella of the United Nations to ensure dignified lives for our peoples in a world where justice and equality prevail. We must therefore shoulder our responsibilities and adhere to our commitments in order to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of all the peoples of the world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait for the statement he has just made.

His Highness Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Naoto Kan, Prime Minister of Japan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Naoto Kan, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Naoto Kan, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Kan (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Joseph Deiss on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I also express my appreciation

to His Excellency Ali Abdussalam Treki for his efforts as President at the previous session. I should also like to express my respect to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership.

Sixty-five years ago, in the aftermath of the Second World War, Japan faced the same challenges as those that today confront developing countries. Japan received a great deal of support from the international community in its struggle to overcome those challenges. It is for that reason that Japan feels strongly about attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is a main focus of the General Assembly this year.

At this time, the international community faces a series of challenges, including poverty, hunger, infectious diseases, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, regional conflicts and global environmental issues. It is an honour for me to have this opportunity to share with the General Assembly my thoughts regarding the role Japan should play in the international community, building on our own experiences.

Let me start by sharing a philosophy that I cherish, namely, that the primary role of the leader of a country should be to create a society in which human suffering is reduced to a minimum. I believe that it is the duty of all political leaders to minimize, to the extent possible, sources of human suffering such as poverty, disease and conflict. With that philosophy in mind, I shall now discuss Japan's concrete contributions in four areas: development, the global environment, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The first area of our contribution is assisting the development of the developing countries. After the Second World War, Japan achieved economic reconstruction owing in part to international assistance. Later, through rapid economic growth, Japan became one of the major economic Powers. With such history behind it, Japan cannot overlook the realities of the world today, where a billion people suffer from hunger, where nearly a million die each year of malaria and where poverty keeps some 72 million children out of school.

Japan attaches great importance to achieving the MDGs. I attended the MDG summit the day before yesterday (see A/65/PV.9), where I announced our new contributions in the areas of health and education — the Kan commitment — based on our desire to save all fledging lives and to enable all children to go to school. Over the course of five years, we will provide $5 billion in health assistance and $3.5 billion in education assistance. Our commitment in the area of health includes a contribution of up to $800 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Our assistance in the area of education will provide a high-quality educational environment for more than 7 million children.

Japan will continue to work comprehensively on development assistance in accordance with the concept of human security, and will lead the efforts of the international community towards meeting the MDGs. As a part of those efforts, my country proposes to convene an international conference in Japan next year in order to strengthen coordination among a broad range of stakeholders, including Governments and international and non-governmental organizations, and to in follow up on the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs.

Reinforcing assistance to Africa, in particular, where progress towards the achievement of the MDGs is slow, is one of the priorities of the international community. Attaining the MDGs in Africa is an important pillar of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process. Japan is enhancing its efforts in areas such as health, water and sanitation, education and food. Japan will continue and strengthen its assistance in order to honour our commitments made at TICAD IV, including the doubling of our official development assistance and providing support in order to double private investment to Africa by 2012.

The second area of our contribution is the global environment. At last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference, Japan announced its target of reducing emissions by 25 per cent compared with 1990 levels by 2020. That is premised on the establishment of a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies participate, as well as on their agreement on ambitious targets.

Small island States face the danger of being submerged as a result of climate change. With a view to adopting a new, comprehensive and legally binding document, Japan will continue to coordinate with other States and the United Nations to lead international negotiations to ensure the success of the sixteenth

session of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held at the end of this year. We will also steadily support developing countries that are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, including those taking mitigation measures such as reducing emissions through public-private partnerships.

Next month, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be convened in Nagoya, Japan, under the theme "Living in harmony with nature". At that meeting, we must come to an agreement on beginning new actions in order to halt the rapid progression of biodiversity loss. The greatest challenges in that regard include setting a common global action target and establishing a new international regime in the area of access and benefits-sharing in connection with genetic resources. As Chair of the meeting, Japan is determined to play an important role in these efforts.

The third area of our contribution is nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I believe that given that the invention of nuclear weapons and the subsequent threat to the survival of the human race was man's doing, the solution to the problem must be within the reach of man's efforts. Japan, as the only country that has ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombings, has a moral responsibility to take concrete steps to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Japan is determined to lead the international community in those endeavours.

Every year for the past 65 years, peace memorial services have been held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to pray for a world without nuclear weapons. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Japan in August this year and was the first Secretary-General to attend the Hiroshima peace memorial ceremony and visit Nagasaki. I would like to thank him once again for making that visit. A representative of the United States was also in attendance at the Hiroshima ceremony, along with representatives of other countries. I very much welcome their decision to attend, which will contribute to increasing momentum towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Japan bears a responsibility to all humankind to pass on to future generations an awareness of the catastrophic nature of nuclear weapons. With that goal in mind, I decided to appoint atomic bomb survivors — known in Japan as hibakusha — as special communicators for a world without nuclear weapons. I have asked them to send out messages to the world about the horror of the use of nuclear weapons and about the value of peace, which only those with first-hand experience can convey.

Japan will coordinate with other countries and civil society to promote education on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. At the sixty-fourth session, Japan submitted a draft resolution entitled "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which the General Assembly adopted in December as resolution 64/47, with the United States as a co-sponsor for the first time. Japan is determined to continue its efforts to strengthen the trend of broadening support for that resolution in the international community.

The steady implementation of the agreement achieved at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in May, is essential. On the occasion of the opening of the new session of the General Assembly, Japan and Australia co-hosted a meeting of foreign ministers from like-minded countries on the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We also launched a new group dedicated to working towards a world without nuclear weapons. We intend to deepen discussions on reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons in the world.

Here, I must make reference to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. The nuclear and missile-development programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea pose a threat to the entire international community. Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete actions in accordance with the series of relevant Security Council resolutions and the joint statement of the Six-Party Talks. Moreover, the steady implementation of the relevant resolutions by all Member States is essential.

Japan has not altered its intention to comprehensively resolve outstanding issues of concern, settle the unfortunate past and normalize relations in accordance with the Japan-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang Declaration. To that end, it is absolutely indispensable to resolve the abduction issue. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes constructive and sincere steps such as implementing its agreement with Japan, Japan is ready to respond in kind.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, it is important for the international community to work in unity to implement firmly the relevant Security Council resolutions and to urge Iran to take realistic decisions. Japan will continue to urge Iran to make efforts to dispel the suspicions of the international community. We will also work together with the international community for a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of this issue.

The fourth area of our contribution is peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Japan, which underwent reconstruction from the destruction of war and achieved economic growth, is deeply aware of the importance and value of peace. Our efforts in the area of peacekeeping and peacebuilding are a manifestation of our determination to act proactively towards achieving true peace.

There is a common assumption that peacebuilding activities aimed at promoting health and education, industrial development and employment should begin after peacekeeping is concluded. However, in order to realize true peace, it is imperative to work on peacebuilding efforts in tandem with peacekeeping activities from the earliest stages of the latter. In April this year, as President of the Security Council, Japan hosted an open debate of the Council on post-conflict peacebuilding (see S/PV.6299). Japan will make efforts to advance this seamless approach to peacebuilding in the world, based on the perspective of human security.

In Haiti, which was devastated by unprecedented damage following the tragic earthquake earlier this year, a team of engineers from the Japan Self-Defence Forces is actively contributing to the United Nations peacekeeping operation's recovery efforts. In flood-hit Pakistan, we currently have helicopters of the Self-Defence Forces providing assistance as an international disaster relief team. With regard to Timor-Leste, we recently took the decision to send military liaison officers to the United Nations peacekeeping operation on the ground. Japan will continue to actively participate in United Nations peacekeeping and disaster relief operations.

Furthermore, we will make concrete efforts in such areas as investing in peace using official development assistance, providing assistance to training centres for peacekeeping operations and developing human resources, such as in the training of civilian peacebuilding experts in Asia.

Of all the places in the world where peacebuilding efforts are under way, Afghanistan in particular is at a crucial stage. At this moment, it is Afghanistan that poses the greatest challenge for the international community in terms of peacebuilding, and it is to Afghanistan that Japan is providing its most intensive assistance. Japan, in cooperation with various partners, has supported the Afghan Government's efforts in a comprehensive and integrated manner, focusing on three pillars: the improvement of security, including police training; reintegration through vocational training for former Taliban rank-and-file soldiers; and job creation and sustainable and self-reliant development through agricultural assistance and similar strategies.

Japan will cooperate with the Republic of Turkey in assisting in Afghan police training by providing funding as well as police personnel, with a view to improving security in Afghanistan. We also recently disbursed $50 million in assistance for the reintegration of insurgents. Japan will provide its assistance in such a way that the people of Afghanistan will be able to perceive a tangible improvement in their livelihoods.

The President returned to the Chair.

I wish to stress the importance of United Nations reform. The United Nations is the only universal international organization with the goal of promoting world peace and prosperity. Ensuring a functional United Nations that is capable of effectively addressing diverse global issues is of the utmost importance. To that end, all Member States must work proactively to promote structural reform and functional reinforcement of the United Nations. The United Nations, for its part, must continuously maintain the understanding and trust of Member States by ensuring its own transparency and accountability.

The role of the Security Council is particularly important for the United Nations to perform effectively in resolving global challenges. For the Security Council to be effective, it needs to have legitimacy and reflect the current realities of the international community. In that regard, reform of the Security Council is indispensable.

I believe that Japan, as the only country that has ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombings and as a country that does not possess nuclear weapons, is well suited to play a role in the Security Council in the twenty-first century. I wish to express once again Japan's determined aspiration to take on further responsibilities for international peace and security as a permanent member of the Security Council.

Japan is confronted today by various social and economic challenges, including an ageing society, a declining birth rate, fiscal problems and energy dependency on other countries. I regard those challenges as global, as many countries are destined to face them sooner or later. It is my belief that Japan will be able to contribute to the world by providing an innovative model, developed through its own national experience, for solving problems facing the world now and in the future. Japan is determined to tackle those challenges aggressively.

Compared with the magnitude of the responsibility we bear to the future of humankind, the differences that divide nations are not great. I am convinced of that. Everything rests on the decisions and actions we take today. Let each one of us take that thought to heart as we begin the new session of the General Assembly and seek to achieve good results in our deliberations.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Japan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Naoto Kan, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): The values upon which the Organization was founded, 65 years ago, are still appropriate for overcoming the global challenges we face today. Whether in fighting poverty, protecting the environment and conserving biodiversity, building peace in conflict areas, helping populations affected by natural disasters, promoting human rights, the rule of law and democracy in the world, making progress towards disarmament and non-proliferation or combating terrorism, we need to work together today more than ever before.

You yourself, Mr. President, have quite rightly organized the general debate under the theme "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance". As a founding Member of the United Nations, Luxembourg fully endorses the Secretary-General's assessment that only the United Nations has the scope, knowledge and legitimacy necessary to develop and implement effective policies in order to address global challenges, which require urgent and collective responses. However, we cannot content ourselves with that simple article of faith. We need to draw the necessary conclusions and take responsibility for them. Those responsibilities are both individual and collective ones, especially for members of the international community and our universal Organization.

At the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, which was held earlier this week, we reiterated our collective determination to do everything possible to free humankind from hunger, illiteracy and disease and ultimately to free the Earth of inequalities — between and within continents, regions and countries and between men and women.

Luxembourg welcomes this renewed commitment to combat poverty in its manifold dimensions. The establishment of a true partnership for development is based upon shared responsibilities for both donor and recipient countries. Although we rely on stronger action from developing countries on good governance, the rule of law, capacity-building and development ownership, developed countries must fulfil their commitments in terms of aid quality and quantity. This is a needed basis for such a partnership, particularly with regard to Africa.

I am proud to say that Luxembourg is among the countries to have kept its promises. We strive to be a reliable international partner, even in times of crisis. By 2000, Luxembourg's official development assistance (ODA) had reached the threshold of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI), and in 2009, our ODA surpassed 1 per cent of GNI. Our Government is committed to maintaining this effort, both in terms of volume and percentage of gross national income. That effort is necessarily linked to steadily growing quality of aid.

The duty to prevent, contain and resolve violent conflict is a central aim of our Organization. The

Charter calls on us to unite our forces in order to maintain international peace and security. With more than 120,000 men and women deployed, peacekeeping operations have reached an unprecedented scale in recent years. While the stabilizing role of United Nations forces is undeniable, the changing nature of conflicts and the increasing complexity of mandates have also revealed the limits of the system, structures and basic tools of our Organization.

The mass rapes and sexual assaults that took place in North Kivu this summer and the inability of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to protect civilians are stark reminders of the difficulty of maintaining peace in conflict areas in the absence of adequate resources and mandates. Those atrocities compel us to urgently continue the debate on the future of peacekeeping operations and to overcome our differences and divisions on this particular issue.

They also serve to underscore once again the importance of substantial United Nations action to eradicate the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. In that regard, I welcome the appointment of Ms. Margot Wallström as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In this, the tenth anniversary year of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, such heinous acts and flagrant violations of human rights can no longer be tolerated. Impunity must also be brought to an end.

While the primary responsibility for the safety and safety of its citizens and for combating poverty and establishing the rule of law lies within the Congolese Government, the international community must do everything possible to support that Government in its efforts to ensure that those responsible for these horrendous crimes are actively sought out, tried and punished. Combating impunity must also lead us to be far more attentive to the report on violations of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 1993 and 2003, the publication of which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has announced for 1 October 2010.

As I said at the Review Conference of the Rome Statute, held in Kampala in May, combating impunity for the most serious crimes should not be an abstract goal any longer, but become a tangible and concrete reality. All of us must cooperate to ensure success in that regard.

Year after year, in this very forum, we express our hope to see peace established in the Middle East. We once again call for a solution based on the coexistence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. We urge the parties to assume their responsibility to create through their actions the framework for a lasting settlement of the conflict. To date, as we know, such calls have mostly been in vain.

The resumption of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians on 2 September 2010, however, once again gives me hope that we will finally reach a final settlement that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and leads to the birth of an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State living in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. I genuinely hope that the call by President Obama to work to achieve a Palestinian State in 2011 will become a reality.

However, we must not be distracted by the enemies of peace and those who seek to sabotage peace talks. It will be important for both parties to show determination, courage, calm and restraint, and to act solely according to international law. Hence the importance of ending all settlement activities. They are illegal, contrary to international law and clearly constitute an obstacle to peace. Why is that so? While the material fact of building on another person's land is in itself to be condemned, it is also a symbol of domination and humiliation that cannot be accepted. As a European, I am heartened that the European Union persists in its strong unanimous call for a prolongation of the moratorium beyond next Sunday, 26 September 2010. President Obama's position is clearly and unambiguously along the same lines.

Meanwhile, it will be of paramount importance to find a lasting solution for the situation in Gaza and to revive its economy. The blockade continues. I hope that the calls by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will at last be heard. In that context, I welcome the launching by the Secretary-General of an international investigation into last May's incident involving the aid flotilla en route to Gaza. A full, honest, impartial, balanced and transparent investigation consistent with

international standards is of great importance. It also, of course, entails the credibility of our Organization.

In the Sudan, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is entering its final phase with the referendum on the self-determination of Southern Sudan and Abyei. After more than two decades of confrontation, the prospects for a settlement are taking shape at last. The road ahead nevertheless remains fraught with difficulties. It is our collective responsibility to help the Sudan steer through this critical period and carry out a process that at last leads to lasting peace for its people. We must ensure that the elections are conducted in a transparent and peaceful manner, regardless, of course, of the outcome.

Increased efforts are also needed to support the current initiatives of the African Union and the United Nations towards a political solution involving all parties in Darfur in order to address the root causes of the conflict and ensure the protection and promotion of human rights, justice and reconciliation. The continuing violence in Darfur threatens the stability of the whole of the Sudan and of the larger region.

A comprehensive approach is also needed in Somalia, a country that has for too long been synonymous with civil war and bloody conflict. Only a comprehensive approach will put an end to the terrorist threat that armed groups pose to Somalia, the subregion and the entire international community, as well as permanently eradicating piracy and establishing the rule of law in Somalia.

My country seeks to play its full effective role in the global efforts to resolve the crisis in Somalia. To that end, Luxembourg actively participates in Operation Atalanta to deter, prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, as well as in the military mission to help train security forces of the Transitional Federal Government — two operations launched by the European Union in support of Security Council decisions. Together with our European and African partners, we intend to continue our support for the Djibouti peace process and for the search for a lasting political solution.

Allow me for a moment to address another issue that I believe it is important not to overlook when discussing ways to guarantee and strengthen peace, security and stability at the international level: disarmament and non-proliferation. The success of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held here in New York in May, brought us closer to our common goal of a world safer for all and free of nuclear weapons. It will now be important to maintain the political momentum and to ensure the full implementation of the decisions taken, including that relating to the holding by 2012 of a conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. I am certain that progress in this area will not remain without implications for other actors and for other issues.

In addition, as I had the opportunity to say yesterday at the ministerial meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament convened by the Secretary-General, we must continue our efforts at both nuclear and conventional disarmament. The constant search for security at the lowest possible level of armaments will make an essential contribution to stability in the world.

In that regard, I welcome the entry into force, on 1 August 2010, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions. At the national level, Luxembourg, which was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention, has also prohibited the funding of cluster munitions.

The progress made towards a legally binding arms trade instrument under the auspices of the United Nations is also to be welcomed. The problems linked to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and the diversion of those weapons into illicit markets have the potential to fuel instability, organized crime and terrorism, thereby jeopardizing peace, security and sustainable economic and social development. Hence the importance of finally adopting a binding instrument in this field.

Next week, together with other partners, my country will hold a symposium in Boston on an arms trade treaty. All United Nations Member States have been invited to participate. We hope thereby to contribute to the discussion and consideration of this important issue.

If we believe in the relevance of a multilateral approach based on the United Nations, we must give the Organization the means to be the centre of multilateral action and a real catalyst for change. We need to push for decisive internal reforms, including, I believe, reform of the Security Council. We are all

aware of the need for Council reform to make it more inclusive and more representative of today's realities, as well as more effective and more transparent. Ensuring an adequate place for small States, which now represent the vast majority of the Organization's Member States, is paramount in this regard.

We must review the instruments at our disposal, be it peacekeeping operations, to which I referred previously, the Peacebuilding Commission or the Human Rights Council, including the necessary integration of human rights in all aspects of United Nations action.

The Peacebuilding Commission represents a key asset for the operational capacity of the international community in the vast peace agenda. Luxembourg fully supports the philosophy behind the Commission and is actively involved in the Guinea-Bissau configuration. The Commission has begun to prove its usefulness. However, we should consider how we can make its results more tangible at the country level in order to allow other countries to benefit from its achievements and face emerging challenges. Our goals must meet the expectations of post-conflict societies and peoples. In that regard, I welcome the recent decision to include Liberia on the Commission's agenda.

We also need to overcome the systemic fragmentation that has gradually developed since the establishment of the Organization and enhance system-wide coherence. An important step in that direction was taken this year with the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). I would like to warmly welcome the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet as head of UN Women. I have no doubt that she will demonstrate a dynamic and unwavering commitment to serve women and girls worldwide. She will be able to rely on the full support of my country, which has for many years pursued an integrated gender approach and an active policy of promoting gender equality, including in the area of development cooperation.

As you rightly pointed out, Sir, when you were elected to the presidency on 11 June (see A/64/PV.93), our primary task is to work together to find constructive solutions for the dignity, safety and security and well-being of all. My country is ready to continue to play its part at the national level, but also as a member of the European Union. The willingness of Luxembourg to assume its national responsibilities can be seen in the concrete examples that I have just given. It is also expressed in our bid for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period 2013 to 2014.

The commitment of Luxembourg is also a European one, as I have just said. By strengthening its capabilities and the increased synergy of its instruments following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union is now more than ever ready to be an active, effective and supportive actor for the United Nations in all areas in which the Organization is active. The European Union wants to be such an active and supportive partner. Hence the importance we attach to a resolution regulating the effective participation of the European Union in the work of our Organization. It is only together in the United Nations that we can help build a better future for all.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.